Indian Antiquities of Hindostan

THOMAS MAURICE



WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

K V Soundara Rajan

This is an invaluable reprint of Thomas Maurice's 7-volume work, *Indian Antiquities*, comprising several beautifully rendered dissertations on the ancient geographical divisions of India, her primeval theology, code of civil laws, forms of government, trade, commerce and literature.
Thomas Maurice draws on an astonishing range of sources to study at length the physical theology of India vis-a-vis the religious practices followed in ancient Egypt, Persia and Greece, and also to unfold the purer and more arcane principles of devotion prevailing in these nations, principles largely buried in the bosom of the priest and the philosopher. He examines, among a vast array of other interesting subjects, many of the arts and sciences anciently cultivated by the Indians, particularly in architecture and sculpture. He presents the entire history of their progress in navigation and considers the manufactures more immediately connected with the beautiful productions of the Indian loom. And throughout his investigations, Maurice diligently seeks contemporary parallels from Persian, Egyptian and Greek laws, governments, religions and literature.

In volume 1 Maurice analyses the geographical divisions of ancient India and describes the grandeur of cities like Palibothra (Patliputra), Delhi, Lahore and Agra. The second volume discusses the theology of Hindustan including the antiquity of the *Vedas*, the doctrine of metempsychosis and the veneration of the solar orb and fire. Volumes 3 and 4 survey Indian temple

(*Continued on second flap*)



Indian Antiquities or Dissertations of Hindostan

VOLUME FIVE

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Thomas Maurice

With a Prefatory Introduction by

K V Soundara Rajan

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and a newly prepared Index



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INDIAN ANTIQUITIES:

OR,

DISSERTATIONS,

RELATIVE TO

THE ANTIENT GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS,
THE PURE SYSTEM OF PRIMEVAL THEOLOGY,
THE GRAND CODE OF CIVIL LAWS,
THE ORIGINAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT,
THE WIDELY-EXTENDED COMMERCE, AND
THE VARIOUS AND PROFOUND LITERATURE,

OF HINDOSTAN:

COMPARED, THROUGHOUT, WITH THE
RELIGION, LAWS, GOVERNMENT, AND LITERATURE,

OF

PERSIA, EGYPT, AND GREECE.

THE WHOLE INTENDED

AS INTRODUCTORY TO, AND ILLUSTRATIVE OF,

THE HISTORY OF HINDOSTAN,

UPON A COMPREHENSIVE SCALE.

VOL. V.

In which the Inveſtigation of the ORIENTAL TRIADS of DEITY is continued; and the HORRIBLE PENANCES of the INDIAN DEVOTEES are detailed.

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CHAPTER VI

The Author, perſevering in his Reſearch throughout Aſia for the Remains of the primitive Doctrine of a divine Triad governing the World, diſcovers evident Veſtiges of it in THIBET *and* TARTARY *engraved on Medals and ſculptured in Images. — An Account of the celebrated* MEDAL *found in the Deſerts of* SIBERIA *impreſſed with the Figure of a triune Deity. — The Scandinavian Theology plainly inculcates the Doctrine in its Three ſacred Perſons,* ODEN, FREA, *and* THOR. — *Extracts from the* EDDA *decidedly confirming the above Aſſertion. — From the northern Aſia this Doctrine, with other Oriental Dogmas, was propagated to America, demonſtrated from Acoſta in their great Idol* TANGATANGA, *or* THREE IN ONE. — *Brief Statement of the theological Code of* CHINA. — *Evidence adduced from Le Compte that the Chineſe are not without the Notion of a* DIVINE TRIAD *governing the World.*

FROM

FROM the previous extenſive ſurvey of the various ſyſtems of EASTERN THEOLOGY, it is evident that the notion of a Divine Triad governing the univerſe, however darkened and degraded through the prevalence of a long ſeries of groſs ſuperſtitions, was a doctrine that immemorially prevailed in the ſchools of Aſia. From whatever diſtant ſource derived, through ſucceſſive generations, and amidſt a thouſand perverſions, the GREAT TRUTH contended for beams forth with more or leſs ſplendor in every country of the ancient world, and darts conviction upon the mind not prejudiced againſt the reception of it by the ſuggeſtions of human pride and the dogmas of falſe philoſophy.

To try the merits of this great cauſe in the court of human reaſon, is evidently to bring it before a tribunal incompetent to decide upon ſo important a queſtion; and is, in fact, to exalt a terreſtial judge before the eternal Judge of all things. Since, however, the ancient Jews did not think it repugnant to reaſon to diſtinguiſh the divine Eſſence into THREE LIGHTS,

LIGHTS, aſſigning them names very nearly reſembling thoſe by which we denominate the three hypoſtaſes of the Chriſtian Trinity, and ſince they affirm that *number in God does not deſtroy his unity*; ſince, alſo, the ſyſtem of *emanations*, iſſuing from, and returning into, the abyſs of the Divinity, was ſo generally admitted into the theology of thoſe pagan nations, whoſe ſole guide in forming that theology is averred to have been the light of reaſon; we are juſtified in aſſerting that this doctrine, though not founded upon reaſon as a baſis, is by no means deſtitute of its decided ſupport and concurrence. The baſis upon which it reſts is far more noble as well as durable, DIVINE REVELATION, ſtrengthened by the moſt ancient traditions, and the conſenting creed of nearly all the kingdoms of the Greater Aſia. This fact, already in part eſtabliſhed, will be ſtill more fully evinced, as we continue the progreſs of our inveſtigation through that extenſive quarter of the globe.

From India, if we direct our eyes northward to the great empires of Tangut and Thibet, and over the vaſt Tartarian deſerts to Siberia itſelf, we ſhall find the ſame ſentiments predominate. In the former country, if the authors quoted in Parſons's Remains of Japhet

may be credited, medals, having the figure of the TRIUNE DEITY ſtamped upon them, are given to the people by the Dalai-Lama, who unites in his own perſon the hierarchal and regal character, to be ſuſpended as a holy object around their necks, or conſpicuouſly elevated in the chapels where they perform their devotions.* It is there alſo aſſerted that the Roman miſſionaries, arriving in thoſe regions, found the people already in poſſeſſion of that fundamental doctrine of the true religion, which, among others, they came to impreſs upon their minds, and univerſally adoring an idol fabricated to reſemble, as nearly as poſſible, a Trinity in Unity. Dr. Parſons is of opinion, that, as there is no record of their having had the principles of the Chriſtian religion ever propagated among them, they could only have attained to the knowledge of that myſterious truth by means of traditional dogmas, handed down to them from very high antiquity, which, in the courſe of ſo many revolving ages and ſuch numerous viciſſitudes as Aſia has undergone, has never been obliterated from their minds, although it has been degraded by being blended with the ſuperſtitions of the neighbouring Brahmins

* See Parſons's Remains of Japhet, p. 185 and 206.

Brahmins and the magi. With reſpect to the Tartars and Siberians, Van Strahlenburg, there cited, after remarking how univerſal a veneration prevails through all northern Tartary for the ſacred number THREE, acquaints us, that " a race of Tartars, called Jakuthi, who are idolaters, and the moſt numerous people of all Siberia, adore in fact only one indiviſible God under three different denominations, which, in their vernacular tongue, are ARTUGON, SCHUGO-TEUGON, TANGARA ;" the firſt of which words Colonel Grant tranſlates, *Creator of all things*; the ſecond, *the God of armies*; and the third he renders, *Amor ab utroque procedens*, the Spirit of heavenly love, proceeding from the two former.

The celebrated SIBERIAN MEDAL, publiſhed by Dr. Parſons, and now depoſited in the valuable imperial cabinet at St. Peterſburg, on one ſide of which is engraved the figure of a triune deity, and, on the other ſide, certain Thibetian characters, illuſtrative of that figure, was found in an old ruined chapel, together with many ancient manuſcripts, near the river Kemptſchyk, which falls into the great river Jeniſei near its head. It is compoſed, according to M. Van Strahlenburg, of a ſubſtance reſembling *terra ſigillata*,

and

and is of the exact ſhape and ſize of the accompanying engraving, the border of one part of the medal being very much corroded. Of this medal, Dr. Parſons's deſcription is as follows: "The image, which appears upon one ſide, and which repreſents a deity, is one human figure as to the body and lower extremities, but is diſtinguiſhed above by three heads. The figure ſits croſs-legged upon a low ſofa, or ſtool, in the manner of Eaſtern ſovereigns: an arched urn, *or ſomething reſembling it*, is under the ſofa, but ſeems empty. It is thought that this figure is thus made, with one body, three heads, and ſix arms, from an idea prevailing among thoſe who fabricated it of a Trinity in Unity."* To this account of Dr. Parſons I ſhall add the remark of Strahlenburg; that the people who fabricated this figure were perhaps of opinion that the firſt perſon in it, content with having created all things, reſted in tranquillity: they therefore drew him with his hands folded acroſs, as if he had reſigned all care of the univerſe to the other two: and they figured out this his pre-eminence by adorning his head with a high mitre-cap. The inſcription on the oppoſite ſide of the medal is in Engliſh

as

* Remains of Japhet, p. 187, ubi ſequent.

as follows: "The bright and ſacred image of Deity, conſpicuous in three figures. Gather the holy purpoſe of God from THEM: love HIM." The mode of expreſſion and the alternate uſe of the ſingular and the plural noun deciſively mark the real ſentiments and intent of thoſe who cauſed it to be thus engraved.

Dr. Parſons deſcribes this triple image as ſeated upon a low ſofa, with an *arched urn*, or *ſomething reſembling it*, underneath. It is rather ſurpriſing that our author, who was by profeſſion a phyſician, an order of men to whom one ſhould ſuppoſe botany ought to be ſomewhat familiar, and a member of the Society of Antiquaries, in whoſe noble-engraved collection the lotos perpetually appears ſculptured on innumerable medallions, vaſes, and other precious relics of Egyptian and Aſiatic antiquities, ſhould have not diſcovered that the urn, or cup, alluded to, is that of the lotos. In reſpect to the figure itſelf, it is evidently the Indian Triad, Brahma, Veeſhnu, and Seeva, who are portrayed ſitting upon that lotos, the uſual throne of the fabulous perſonages of Oriental mythology; and it is one among many other forcible and direct teſtimonies over how vaſt an extent of Aſia,

in

in ancient periods, the religion, and with it probably the laws and ſciences, of Hindoſtan were diffuſed.

While in theſe remote northern regions it would be improper to paſs unnoticed by the ancient race and religious rites of Scandinavia, I have elſewhere endeavoured, by a chain of ſtrong evidence, to demonſtrate that their firſt celebrated god Oden, or Woden, was no other than the Taut of Phœnicia, the Hermes of Egypt, the elder Buddha, or Boodh, of India, the Fo of China, and the Mercury of Greece and Rome. In ſhort, that the religion of almoſt every nation of the earth, previous to the happy diffuſion of the Chriſtian doctrine, exhibited little elſe beſides the ſhattered fragments of one grand ſyſtem of primitive, I do not ſay the earlieſt, theology, once prevalent in the Greater Aſia. Not the leaſt forcible of the arguments adduced to ſupport this hypotheſis, an hypotheſis that gives to Britain, in the earlieſt periods of the world, a colony of Brahmins, or at leaſt of Brahmin-taught ſages of the ſect of Boodh, are thoſe derived from the ſtriking ſimilitude of the ſuperſtitious ceremonies inſtituted and obſerved in thoſe reſpective regions, and the very ſingular circumſtance of the Indian god and planet Boodh, under the

name of Woden and Mercury, conferring his name, over all the northern and weſtern empires of Europe, upon one particular day of the week. This remarkable fact is evidenced in the inſtance of the BOODH WAR, or dies Mercurii, of India being the very ſame fourth day of the week which the Scandinavians conſecrated to Oden, which our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors denominated Woden's dag, and which we call Wedneſday. I ſhall not farther anticipate what will ſhortly be preſented to the reader on this curious ſubject, than by remarking that both Keyſler and Mallet unite in aſſigning to this god-king Oden an Aſiatic origin, and in aſſerting that the mythology which he introduced was the mythology, not of a cold ungenial region where the efforts of a lively imagination are checked by the rigour of the climate and objects that inſpire gloom and melancholy, but of a warm, luxurious, ſouthern, realm, where an active, vigorous, fancy, under the impetuous goad of ardent paſſions, and animated by the moſt enlivening and charming objects, forms the moſt romantic images, and indulges its natural propenſities to gaiety by the moſt mirthful feſtivals and the moſt ſplendid rites.

In respect to the Scandinavian religion, I shall only for the present observe, that, in regard to the doctrine in question, it does not differ from other codes of religious institution in Asia; for, it plainly inculcates the worship of a triple DEITY in the mythologic persons of ODEN, FREA, and THOR.*

Concerning the first of these deities I think it has been in my power to produce incontestable evidence of his being the very identical personage denominated Taut, Hermes, and Boodh, through all the East. M. Mallet has produced as irrefragable proof that FREA, the second person in this Scandinavian Triad, is no other than the celebrated Dea Syria, adored at Babylon, and the Venus Urania of the Persians. She seems, indeed, to be the prolific mother of all things, the great principle of fecundity, and her name and rites demonstrate her close affinity with the RHEA of the Greeks, to whose honour they smote the resounding cymbal, while the sacred melody mysteriously shadowed out the harmony that prevails through universal nature. She gave her name to the sixth day of the week, which was consecrated to her under the denomination of FREYTAG, that is Frea's day, synonymous

* Mallet's Northern Antiquities, vol. i. p. 96.

ſynonymous with our *Friday*; and, in direct teſtimony that her character is not unconnected with that of Venus Urania, as aſſerted by M. Mallet, may be adduced the remarkable circumſtance of that day being diſtinguiſhed in the weſtern world by the appellation of *Dies Veneris*.* With reſpect to THOR, the third of theſe northern deities, otherwiſe known among the Celtic nations by the name of TARANIS, a title which, in the Welch, that is, the old Cimbrian, language, M. Mallet obſerves, ſignifies *thunder*; he in every reſpect greatly reſembles the Eendra of the Indians, and the Jupiter Tonans of the Greeks and Romans. Thor præſidet in aëre, fulmina et fruges gubernat. This Scandinavian Jove ſeems to have been alſo armed with the CHACRA of Veeſhnu, recently inſcribed as inſtinct with life; for, ſays our author, THOR always carried a mace, or club, which, as often as he diſcharged it, returned of itſelf to the hand that launched it. He graſped this impatient and reſtleſs weapon, which, like the thunder-bolt of the Grecian Jove, vibrated to be gone, with ſtrong gauntlets of iron, and he wore around his loins a myſtic girdle which had

* Mallet's Northern Antiquities, vol i. p. 95.

had the virtue to renovate his ſtrength, when neceſſary. " It was with theſe formidable arms that he overthrew the monſters and giants" (the Aſſoors, or evil dæmons of India) " when the gods ſent him to oppoſe their enemies."* To Thor, likewiſe, there was a day conſecrated, in the northern mythology, which ſtill retains his name in various languages of Europe. That day is, in Daniſh, called Thorſdag; in Swediſh, Torſdag; in Engliſh, Thurſday. It is not leſs worthy of obſervation that this day was, by the Romans, and by all thoſe nations who have ſince adopted their aſtronomical language, called *Dies Jovis*.

In that valuable relic of northern genius, the EDDA, in which is contained an authentic epitome of Runic mythology, theſe three deities are repreſented as ſitting on three thrones, with each a crown on his head. The deſcription is curious, and I ſhall preſent it to the reader in the words of that eminent antiquary and worthy prelate, Dr. Percy, who tranſlated it, and who, as he honoured my juvenile productions with his patronage, I hope will extend it to the maturer efforts of my pen. In that poem, the aſtoniſhed Gangler,

* Northern Antiquities, vol. i. p. 97.

Gangler, being introduced into the lofty palace, or hall, of the gods, the roof of which "was formed of brilliant gold, beheld, three thrones raiſed one above another, and upon each throne ſat a ſacred perſonage. Upon his aſking which of theſe was their king, the guide anſwered, he, who ſits on the loweſt throne, is the king, his name is HAR, *the lofty one*; the ſecond, JAFNHAR, or *equal to the lofty one*; he, who ſits on the higheſt throne, is called THRIDI, or *the third*."* The right reverend editor informs us, that, in the manuſcript of the EDDA, preſerved at Upſal, there is a repreſentation, or drawing, very rudely executed, of theſe three thrones, and of the three perſons ſitting upon them, before whom Gangler is drawn in a ſuppliant poſture. "Theſe figures," his lordſhip adds, "bear ſo great a reſemblance to the Roman Catholic pictures of the Trinity, that we muſt not wonder if ſome have imagined them to be an alluſion to that doctrine, particularly thoſe who ſuppoſe it was already known to Plato and ſome others among the ancient Pagans." To this remark I beg permiſſion to ſubjoin, that though I am very far from conceiving that

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* EDDA, tranſlated by the editor of Mallet's North. Antiq. vol. ii. p 3.

theſe thrones have any immediate alluſion to the *thrones* which the pious Daniel ſaw *exalted*, (for, ſo the orignal words, tranſlated *caſt down*, ſhould be rendered,) whereon *the Ancient of Days* and the eternal Logos ſat in heaven to judge mankind, and much farther from drawing any compariſon between the IMMORTAL BEINGS that ſat upon the latter, and the *deified mortals* that were exalted to the former, thrones; yet I may ſurely contend for the perverſion of ſome ancient tradition, by which the mind of the Scandinavian theologue was impreſſed with the idea of a heaven, in which were erected three thrones for as many ſovereign gods: I ſay the *perverſion* of ſome ancient tradition, ſince it is for a Triad of Deity, the manifeſt veſtige of that nobler doctrine, a Trinity in Unity, that I, in this inſtance, alone contend. But, leſt I ſhould appear, amidſt theſe excurſive inquiries into the Pagan Triads, to have altogether loſt ſight of that nobler doctrine, I ſhall, upon this ſubject of *celeſtial thrones*, ſubmit to the reader a very curious paſſage, relative to the belief of the Jews in a triune Deity, which occurs in the ſame extenſive note of the Univerſal Hiſtory from which I borrowed a former extract on that ſubject, and in which the true mean-

ing

ing of the paſſage in Daniel, juſt cited, reſpecting the throne of Deity, is diſcuſſed. The writers of the Talmud, they aſſert, have plainly unfolded their real opinion in agitating this queſtion: Why is *the throne of God*, in Daniel, mentioned in the plural number? "After ſeveral trifling anſwers, which are there given as the ſolution of the ſeveral learned rabbies, one of whom pretends, that the plural implies *the thrones of God and David*: the laſt and concluding reply is to the following purpoſe: That it is blaſphemy to ſet the *creature* on the throne of the Creator, bleſſed for ever; and the whole is cloſed with theſe notable words: *If any one can ſolve this difficulty, let him do it; if not, let him go his way and not attempt it.*" The meaning, they obſerve, is too obvious to need explanation.*

That the vaſt continent of America was in the moſt remote periods viſited, and in part colonized, by the great naval and commercial powers of the ancient world, the Phœnicians, Egyptians, and Carthaginians, who, driven by tempeſts, or ſome of the various accidents attendant upon the perilous ſcience of naviga-

 tion,

* See Ancient Univerſal Hiſtory, vol. iii. p. 12. Edit. oct. 1748.

tion, has been rendered highly probable by the learned Hornius in his book, on the Origin of the Americans, from various concurring circumſtances of affinity, enumerated by him, reſpecting the language, civil cuſtoms, and religious inſtitutions, prevailing among thoſe reſpective nations. The univerſal adoration of the ſolar orb by the Americans, and the remarkable fact mentioned by Sir William Jones in the Aſiatic Reſearches, that the firſt dynaſties of Peruvian kings are dignified, exactly as thoſe of India are, by the name of the ſun and moon,* may alſo be adduced in evidence that a race, wandering from the neighbourhood of Caucaſus, and traverſing the vaſt deſerts of Aſia, towards the north-eaſtern extremity, paſſed over the chain of iſlands, now known to exiſt between the two continents, and contributed their proportion towards the population of the new world. Whether in Manca, or MANCU, whom the Peruvian traditional books mention as their firſt emperor, may be traced, as Hornius aſſerts, any real veſtige of the race of Tartars called MANCHEW, or, in the appellation of *Maſatecæ*, one of the four nations

* Vide Hornius de Orig. Gent. Americ. p. 105. Edit. oct 1652.

tions of New Spain; and, in *Massachusetæ*, a people of New England, the ancient MASSAGETÆ, are discovered; these are points on which, from the uncertainty of general etymology, it would be rash to form any absolute decision. But, on a recent perusal of Acosta's Authentic History of South America, I could not avoid being struck with his account of the dreadful sanguinary sacrifices of which both the Peruvians and Mexicans are enormously guilty, and I shall here insert it, as forming a striking and gloomy similitude to the bloody sacrifices of the old Scythians and Indians, described from Herodotus and Mr. Wilkins in many former pages. That similitude is more particularly visible in these two points, the first is, that the victims thus sacrificed *are prisoners taken in war*; the second is, that these are offered up *for the preservation of the monarch.**

The ancient Peruvians used to sacrifice "young children from foure, or six, yeares old unto tenne; and the greatest parte of these sacrifices were for the affaires that did concern the Ynca, as in sicknesss, for his recovery; and, when he went to the warres, for victory. In these solemnities they sacrificed

* See the chapter on the Scythian sacrifices.

ficed the number of two hundred children of the age defcribed above, which was a cruelle and inhumane fpectacle. The manner of the facrifice was to *drowne* them and *bury* them with certaine reprefentations and ceremonies; and fometimes they cut off their heads, anointing themfelves with the blood. They did likewife facrifice *virgins*; and, if a native were ficke, and the ecclefiaftic tolde him confidently that he fhould die, they did then *facrifice his own fonne* to the SUNNE, or to VIRACHOCA, defiring them to be fatisfied with him, and *fpare the life of the father*."* In the following page of the fame author we read as follows: "Although they of Peru have furpaffed the Mexicans in the flaughter and facrifice of their *children*, yet they of Mexico have exceeded them, yea and all the nations of the worlde, in the great number of *men* which they facrificed, and in the horrible manner thereof. The men, thus facrificed, were *taken in the warres*, neither did they ufe thefe folemne facrifices, *but of captives*; in this they followed the cuftom of the ancients," Acofta might here have added, in particular that of the Scythians, and

* Acofta's Hiftorie of the Indies, p. 380, edit quart Lond. 1604.

and the Druids, their *direct descendants*; as I have little doubt of very ſhortly demonſtrating. "In truth, the ordinary warres they carried on were only made to obtain captives for their ſacrifices; and, therefore, when they did fight, they laboured to take their enemies alive for the purpoſe of enjoying their ſacrifices."* The ſacrifice was performed upon a raiſed terrace, which cannot fail of bringing to the reader's recollection the high quadrangular altar of the Scythian ſavages, and the ceremony itſelf is thus deſcribed: "The ſovereign prieſt carried a great knife in his hand of a large and ſharpe flint: another prieſt carried a collar of wood, wrought in form *of a ſnake*:" he might have ſaid the *ſerpent*, the ſymbol of that ſun, whoſe devoted victims they were. "The other four prieſts, who aſſiſted, arranged themſelves in order, adjoining to the *pyramidal ſtone*, whereof I have ſpoken; being directly againſt the doore of the chapell of their idoll. This ſtone was ſo pointed, as that the man who was to be ſacrificed, being laid thereon upon his back, did bend in ſuch ſort, as occaſioned the ſtomach to ſeparate upon the ſlighteſt inciſion of the knife. When the ſacrificers were

* Acoſta's Hiſt. of the Indies, p. 382.

were thus in order, they brought forth ſuch as had been taken in warre, and cauſed them *to mount up thoſe large ſtairs*, in rank, to the place were the miniſters were prepared. As they reſpectively approached thoſe miniſters, the latter ſeized them, two of them laying hold of the two feet and two more of the two hands of the unhappy victim, and in this manner caſt him on his back upon the pointed ſtone, while the fifth faſtened round his neck the ſerpentine collar of wood. The high prieſt then opened his ſtomach with a knife with wonderful dexterity and nimbleneſs, tearing out his heart with his hand, which he elevated ſmoking towards the ſunne, to whom he did offer it, and preſently, turning towards the idol, did caſt the heart towards it, beſmearing his face with the blood. In this manner were all the victims ſacrificed, and the bodies afterwards precipitated down the ſtairs, reeking with their gore. There were ever forty or fifty victims, at the leaſt, thus ſacrificed." The above paſſage I have given unabridged, becauſe in it are enumerated certain particulars, as the wooden ſerpent, the pyramidal ſtone, and the offering to the Sun the heart of the victim, which exhibit ſtill leſs equivocal marks of the ſimilarity pre-

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vailing in the theology of the two continents; nor can I, for the ſame reaſon, prevail upon myſelf to omit his relation of their very remarkable veneration for fountains and rivers, and their frequent ablution in them. "Anciently there were Indians appointed to perform ſacrifice to fountains, ſprings, and rivers, whoſe waters paſſe through the towns. To this day, they are honoured with a conſiderable ſhare of the ancient reſpect paid to them: but a more eſpecial regard and reverence is paid to *the meeting of two rivers*; and there they perform ablutions, anointing themſelves firſt with the flower of mays, adding thereto divers ceremonies, as they do likewiſe in their bathes."* That portion, however, of the theological ſyſtem of the Americans, to which I wiſh to direct the more particular attention of the reader, is contained in the following paſſage, where this reverend father, in pious indignation, acquaints us, that "the devil, after his manner, hath brought a Trinity into their idolatry; for, the three images of the Sun, called APOMTI, CHURUNTI, and INTIQUAOQUI, are terms that ſignify FATHER and LORD SUN, the SON SUN, and the BROTHER SUN. In like manner they named the

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* Acoſta's Hiſt. of the Indies, p. 379.

THREE IMAGES of CHUQUILLA, which is the god that rules in the region of the air." But, according to this writer, they go a ſtep farther than the acknowlegdement of a mere Triad of Deity, and worſhip a direct Trinity in Unity: for, " in Cuquiſaco there is a certaine oratory, where they worſhip a great idol, whom they call TANGATANGA, which ſignifies ONE IN THREE and THREE IN ONE."* Of theſe three Triads, the firſt very much reſembles the Triplaſios Mithras, or threefold power of God in the Sun, adored by the Perſians; and the ſecond is parallel to the Jupiter Pater, Jupiter Soter, and Jupiter Ultor, of the Greeks; or, if the reader chooſes rather to underſtand it phyſically, in reſpect to the ætherial element, this American Eendra may be the Jupiter Tonans, Jupiter Serenus, and Jupiter Pluvius, all which names are reſpectively conferred upon him by ancient writers; but the third is an evident perverſion of the dogma of a purer theology handed traditionally down, through a channel long ſince forgotten, from thoſe holy patriarchs, to whom the eternal Father was pleaſed to reveal the awful ſecrets of that nature, which, without ſuch revelation, it is utterly impoſſible for finite

* Acoſta's Hiſt. of the Indies, p. 412.

finite beings to fathom; the ſtupendous myſtery of a Trinity of Hypoſtaſes in the Unity of the Divine Eſſence.

But let us return to the great theatre of our preſent inveſtigation, to ASIA, and inquire if the ancient and celebrated empire of China affords a ſyſtem of theology illuſtrative of a ſubject ſo deeply involved in the obſcurity of Eaſtern philoſophy and entangled in the mazes of Oriental allegory.

In that remote and happy region, ſecluded not leſs by ſituation than by the wiſe policy of its ſovereigns from all intercourſe with the other nations of the earth, the true religion imported, as ſome think, by Noah himſelf, or one of his pious poſterity, flouriſhed longeſt unadulterated.* A ſucceſſion of virtuous and magnificent monarchs, deſcending for near three thouſand years in regular ſucceſſion from the great FOHI, whoever he was, made it the proudeſt glory of their reſpective reigns to ſupport it by their whole authority, and enforce it by the noble and ſplendid example of regal piety.

Since

* See Shuckford's Connexions, vol. i. p. 33, and Sir Walter Raleigh's Hiſtory of the World, p. 54. The ſubject is extenſively conſidered in the Hiſtory itſelf.

Since it is my intention, in the enſuing hiſtory, occaſionally to conſider India upon the great ſcale of its more extended geography, as the ancients ſeem to have underſtood the term, and as ſtated by Sir William Jones in the Aſiatic Reſearches,* that is to ſay, as an empire extending from the great northern range of Caucaſus to the extreme ſouthern point of Sinhala, or Ceylone, and from the frontiers of Perſia on the weſt to the Chineſe Ocean on the eaſt, it will be my province hereafter to detail a variety of circumſtances that have relation to the early hiſtory of China, at preſent ſo little known, which will afford the ſtrongeſt corroboration to the Moſaic hiſtory, and inconteſtibly evince that the great lines of the moſt ancient Aſiatic and the Chriſtian theology are the ſame. From an elaborate compariſon which I have alſo made of the moſt ancient hiſtories of China, as they ſtand tranſlated and epitomized, in Couplet, Martinius, and Du Halde, from thoſe celebrated Chineſe books of profound antiquity the XU-KIM, or *book* of *books*; containing the annals of the three firſt imperial dynaſties; the XI-KIM, a more extenſive hiſtorical detail; and the writings of Confucius, with ſuch authen-

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* See Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i. p. 418.

tic Sanſcreet accounts of Indian hiſtory as I have been able to procure, I have the moſt confident hopes that new light will be reflected as well upon the intricate hiſtory of thoſe countries as upon that of Japan. The hiſtory of the latter country, by Kæmpfer, has in the courſe of that review been of infinite ſervice to me, ſince, as an immemorial connexion has ſubſiſted between theſe three nations, which, after all that has been written by De Guignes and the learned Pauw, have probably all three deſcended from one common ſtock, the early hiſtory of the one muſt, under certain reſtrictions and with due allowances for the changes of cuſtoms and opinions during a long courſe of ages, be conſidered as the hiſtory of the others. I ſhall, in this place, preſent to the view of the reader a few of the points in which that affinity may be clearly traced; and, in the firſt place, let us attend to it in regard to their theology.

Martinius, who, from a reſidence of ten years upon the ſpot, and from underſtanding both the letters, or characters, and language, of the country, muſt be ſuppoſed well qualified to judge of their religious doctrines and practices, aſſerts that they anciently worſhipped one SUPREME GOD, a ſpirit, *nullis*

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ad religionem exciendum ſimulachris aut ſtatuis uſi, uſing neither images or figures to excite the devotion of the people, becauſe as the Deity was every where preſent, and his nature exalted far above the reach of human comprehenſion, it was impoſſible by any external image properly to repreſent him to the ſenſes of men. Therefore he obſerves, nullum in iis templis *antiquitus* idolum viſebatur, ſed ſimplex tabella, in qua ſinenſi linguâ literis aureis exaratum erat, ſpiritualis cuſtodis urbis ſedes; no idol in the moſt ancient periods of their empire was to be ſeen in all their temples, but only an unornamented tablet, upon which was engraved, in large Chineſe characters, in gold, the following inſcription: THE SANCTUARY OF THE SPIRITUAL GUARDIAN OF THE CITY. This pure worſhip of the Deity, whom they denominated XANG-TI, or TYEN, continued unadulterated till after the death of Confucius, which took place 500 years previous to the Chriſtian æra, and is a remarkable and almoſt ſolitary inſtance of the pure primeval worſhip flouriſhing among a people confining upon nations immerſed in the baſeſt idolatries of Aſia. That they believed in the exiſtence

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of ſubordinate ſpirits, the miniſters of the great God in the government of the univerſe, and that they paid an inferior kind of homage to thoſe ſpirits, is to be accounted for in the perſuaſion, before noticed as being ſo generally prevalent in Aſia, that they might be their interceſſors with offended Omnipotence, and avert his apprehended vengeance.

Confucius, the nobleſt and moſt divine philoſopher of the pagan world, was himſelf the innocent occaſion of the introduction of the numerous and monſtrous idols that in after-ages diſgraced the temples of China; for, having in his dying moments encouraged his diſconſolate principles by prophecying SI FAM YEU XIM GIN, *in occidente erit* SANCTUS, in the weſt the Holy One will appear; they concluded that he meant the good Bhood of India, and immediately introduced into China the worſhip of that deity with all the train of abominable images and idolatrous rites, by which that groſs ſuperſtition was in ſo remarkable a manner diſtinguiſhed. To what holy and illuſtrious perſonage, about to appear in the weſt, Confucius, who ſeems to have inherited at once the ſublime virtues and the

prophetic ſpirit of the old patriarchs, alluded, ſhall preſently be unfolded.*

Were it not for the very ſingular circumſtance, recorded in the Chineſe hiſtories, that the mother of Fohi, the great anceſtor of the Chineſe, was embraced and rendered pregnant by A RAINBOW, a mythological fable very probably originating either in ſome miſconceived tradition concerning the *bow*, which was firſt manifeſted to Noah as a token that the waters ſhould never again inundate the globe, or elſe alluſive to his having emerged from the boſom of the ſurrounding ocean to commence a new ſcene of exiſtence upon the renovated earth; were it not alſo recorded in the ſame hiſtories that Fohi carefully trained up *ſeven ſorts of creatures*, which he annually ſacrificed to the Supreme Spirit of Heaven and Earth, a circumſtance ſo exactly conſonant to the account of Scripture, that Noah took into the ark of every clean beaſt *by ſevens*, and of fowls in the air *by ſevens*; were it not that they fix the firſt reſidence of this their great anceſtor, where, according to the moſt ancient Sanſcrect traditions, the firſt Chineſe colony did abſolutely ſettle, in the

* Vide Couplet. Scient. Sinic. p. 71, and Martini Martinii Sinicæ Hiſtoriæ, lib. iv. p. 149. Edit. duod. Amſterdam, 1659.

the province of XENSI, to the north-weſt of India; were it not probable, from the total ſilence of Scripture concerning the future incidents of the life of ſo important a perſonage as the great and favoured patriarch and the mad unreſtrained act of his progeny in building the tower of Babel, that he really did migrate from the place where the ark reſted to ſome ſpot, remote from his degenerate offspring, on the extremities of Aſia; did not the very name of him, who builded the firſt altar after the flood, and offered thereon the firſt victim to the Lord, ſignify OBLATION, whence doubtleſs Noah was deſignated as the ſacrificer on the old celeſtial ſphere, under the name of Shin Num, his immediate ſucceſſor in the government of China, or rather himſelf by another appellative, for theſe two perſons are denominated the founders of that empire; did not we recognize the *Oriental* and in particular the Arabian denomination of China, which is Sin, and in Num the Menu of India, which words combined together may be rendered into Latin *Sinicus Noah*, the Chineſe Noah: were it not for theſe circumſtances, which ſo decidedly point to the perſon of Noah, I ſhould be inclined to agree in

opinion with Mr. Bryant, that, by Fohi, the Chinefe meant the parent of the human race himfelf, inftead of the venerable father of the regenerated world.

If Mr. Bryant's hypothefis could be admitted, the eighteen thoufand years, which he obferves are faid to have intervened between the reign of the firft and fecond emperors of China, by being confidered as centuries only, (for which interpretation of the word thoufand fome learned chronologifts have ftrenuoufly contended,) will come very near the fcriptural account of time that elapfed from the period of the creation to the deluge. In that cafe, however, Fohi and Shin Num muft be confidered as diftinct characters, living in very remote ages, which their hiftory does not warrant;* but that, at all events, Shin Num and Noah were the fame perfon, and that both meant the Menu of India, can fcarcely admit of a doubt, efpecially when Mr. Bryant's judicious obfervation, that, in Hoang, or Hoam-ti, the fon of Shin Num, the veftiges of the fcriptural name of Ham may plainly be traced. As a farther corroboration of this fuppofition, I fhall for the prefent only add that the feven

* See Mr. Bryant's Analyfis, vol. iii. p. 583.

ſeven regal deſcendants of Shin Num, who, according to Couplet, reigned after him, that is, in the provinces ſubject to the ſupreme head of the empire, were doubtleſs the ſeven Reyſhees, or holy men of India; and theſe, after all, were probably no other than the ſeven perſons who went into the ark with Noah, forming, with himſelf, the famous OGDOAS of antiquity.

From an author compelled in a great degree, on account of the repeated attacks made by ſceptics upon the Moſaic hiſtory through the ſides of Indian and Chineſe antiquities, not to paſs unnoticed theſe circumſtances, the reader will naturally be led to expect a more extenſive inveſtigation of theſe abſtruſe points hereafter. I ſhall, therefore, at preſent, only inquire if any ſentiments, of a nature conſonant to thoſe already demonſtrated to have been ſo widely diffuſed through Aſia, prevailed in any ancient theological code of China. The purity of their primæval theology has been noticed. They originally adored no ſculptured images of the Deity, although they worſhipped him in the emanations of guardian and benevolent ſpirits that iſſue from the exhauſtleſs fountain of Deity. The doctrine of thoſe

emanations, and the lapſe and immortality of the ſoul, afford the ſtrongeſt reaſon for ſuppoſing that the tradition of a God-Mediator, to appear upon earth after a certain revolution of ages, was cheriſhed from time immemorial in China. Since Confucius ſtrictly adhered to, and vigorouſly enforced in his writings, the pure doctrine of his country, which equally forbade all images of the Deity and the deification of dead men; and, in conſequence, could not conſiſtently recommend to them to the groſs idolatry of the Bhudſoiſts; it is highly probable that this devout and venerable perſonage, when he told them *to look to the weſt for the* HOLY ONE *that was to appear upon earth*, was inſpired with ſome foreknowledge of the great event of the redemption, and by divine inſpiration was enabled to predict the advent of the Meſſiah in Paleſtine, a country which is exactly ſituated after the manner deſcribed; and, indeed, is the moſt weſtern country of Aſia, in reſpect to China.

In direct and poſitive proof that I am not attributing to the Chineſe theological notions which they did not in the moſt ancient æras of their empire poſſeſs; and,

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in particular, that they really did, either traditionally, or by revelation, entertain a rooted belief of the pacification of the Divine Being by means of a human oblation of royal deſcent and of diſtinguiſhed piety, I ſhould produce from their moſt authentic hiſtorians an inſtance of a moſt amiable and virtuous monarch, CHING-TANG, the founder of the ſecond imperial dynaſty of China, bearing the denomination of XANG, being called upon by the public voice, at a period of national diſtreſs, to be the propitiatory ſacrifice of offended heaven. An univerſal barrenneſs, ariſing from continued drought, having for ſeven years together deſolated the kingdom and thinned the inhabitants of it, Ching-tang was told by the prieſts, who interpreted the will of heaven, that its vengeance could only be appeaſed by a human ſacrifice, and he readily became the devoted victim of that vengeance. The aged king, ſays Martinius,* having laid by his imperial robes, cut off the venerable grey hairs of his head, ſhaved his beard, pared his nails, and ſubjected himſelf to other preparatory ceremonies, eſteemed indignities in China, bare-footed,

* Vide Martini Martinii Hiſtoriæ Sinicæ, lib. iii. p. 75.

footed, covered over with ashes, and in the posture of a condemned criminal, approached the altar of sacrifice, where with suppliant hands he entreated heaven to launch the thunder-bolt of its wrath, and accept the life of the monarch as an atonement for the sins of the people. The Chinese histories add that, after he had finished his prayer, and for some time devoutly waited the awful stroke, which was to crush the sovereign and save the nation, (a stroke which heaven in remembrance of his piety and resignation forbore to inflict,) the sky became suddenly black with clouds, and the rain descended in torrents, so that the steril earth shortly resumed its wonted fertility, and unbounded plenty reigned over the whole empire.* In the annals of China this solemn fact is recorded to have happened in the eighteenth century before Christ; and it is very remarkable, that, in the very same century, according to Usher† and the chronology of our Bibles, the seven years famine in Egypt happened. From this circumstance we are naturally induced to conclude, that the dearth spoken of in Scripture

* Martinius, p. 76. Le Compte, p. 319.
† Vide Usherii Annales, p. 15.

ture was general throughout the Eaſt; and indeed it is evident, from Joſeph's ſupplying all the neighbouring countries with grain, that it was not confined to the Egyptian territories alone. Thus wonderfully do the ancient archives of a great and enlightened nation, ſecluded for three thouſand centuries from all connexion with the reſt of the world, whence ariſes an impoſſibility that thoſe archives ſhould be adulterated, in this as well as in many other inſtances which it will fall to my province to point out hereafter, bear deciſive teſtimony as well to the authenticity of the Moſaic hiſtory as to the verity of the great outlines of the Moſaic theology. Among theſe the *veſtigia*, for which alone I muſt again repeat that I contend, the *veſtigia*, of a pure undebaſed Trinity, are not the leaſt viſible.

It is the reſult of both extenſive reading and perſonal inquiry, made by a learned friend in Aſia, that I am able to deſcribe the vaſt body of the Chineſe nation, thoſe few excepted who practiſe the pure and refined precept of the great Confucius, as divided, at this day, like the Indians, into two grand religious ſects, if, in fact, the name of *religious* may be beſtowed upon thoſe who

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have ſo far deviated from the pure primæval devotion of their anceſtors, as either, on the one hand, to be plunged into the groſſeſt materialiſm, or, on the other, into the moſt complicated and multifarious idolatry. It is ſurely no ſmall honour for Chriſtianity to be able to bring not a few proofs of its grand and fundamental truths from the very creed and practice of its moſt inveterate oppoſers; to find its pure principles lying dormant in the deſpumated and feculent droſs of paganiſm, and the hallowed ſpark of that original flame which blazed upon the altar erected by Noah, on his deſcent from Ararat, occaſionally beaming forth amidſt the embers ſmoaking upon the polluted ſhrines of falſe and fictitious deities.

Tne firſt and moſt ancient of theſe ſects is called *the ſect of immortals*, and the founder of it was LAO-KIUN, who flouriſhed before Confucius, and about the year 600, preceding the Chriſtian æra. Although the principles of Epicurus have been attributed to this great philoſopher, and though the followers of Lao-kiun at this day are, as has been obſerved, rank materialiſts, yet, from the account of his writings given by Couplet and Le Compte, there is the greateſt reaſon to

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ſuppoſe that his original doctrines have been groſsly corrupted and miſrepreſented by his diſciples. They are called *immortals*, ſay theſe writers, from a certain liquor, which LAO-KIUN invented, and which, he affirmed, would, if drank, make men immortal. This has every appearance of being an allegory, and hereby may be meant no other than the AMREETA, or ambroſial nectar of the Brahmins. They are notoriouſly guilty of the worſhip of dæmons, and temples of great ſumptuouſneſs and magnitude are erected to thoſe dæmons in various parts of the empire. It was the leading feature in LAO-KIUN's ſyſtem of philoſophical theology, and a ſentence which he continually repeated as the foundation of all true wiſdom, that TAO, *the eternal Reaſon, produced* ONE; *One produced* TWO; *Two produced* THREE; *and* THREE *produced all things*: a moſt ſingular axiom for a heathen philoſopher, and, as Le Compte, from whoſe Memoirs of China I have verbatim copied the above ſentence, obſerves relative to it, a very evident proof that he muſt have had ſome obſcure notions of a Trinity.*

The other great ſect of China is that of the Bhudſoiſts, or thoſe who worſhip the Indian

* Le Compte's Memoirs of China, p. 314.

Indian god Bhudda under the ſoftened name of Fo, as, from not having either B or D among the characters that form their alphabet, they were unable to pronounce the prior appellation. The Bhudſoiſts have been denominated downright atheiſts; the contrary, however, may be fairly inferred from the practice of thoſe who worſhip a ſtone as the image of God. That our Britiſh Druids were a race of Eaſtern philoſophers of the ſect of the Indian Bhudda, I mean the elder, who was the ſame identical perſon as the Phœnician Taut, the Egyptian Hermes, the Woden of the Scandinavians, and the Mercury of the Greeks and Romans, I hope, ſhortly, to produce very clear evidence in an expreſs treatiſe upon the antiquity of Stonehenge. I had hopes of being able to compreſs the ſubject ſufficiently to form a chapter of this volume of Indian Antiquities; but I found myſelf obliged, occaſionally, to diverge ſo far from ſubjects immediately connected with India, and to take ſuch an extenſive range, in proof of my poſitions, through every region of Aſia, or rather of the earth, that ſcarcely an octavo *volume*, and much leſs a *chapter* of ſuch a volume, would be ſufficient to contain the

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refult of the inquiry. I referve that interefting fubject for a diftinct Differtation.

The Bhudfoifts of China have had the fkill to render their real opinions lefs eafy of difcuffion, by adopting the artifice made ufe of by the ancient Egyptian and Greek philofophers, to veil their myfterious tenets, that of a two-fold doctrine; the one EXOTERIC, or external, the other ESOTERIC, or interior. If, however, they are at all acquainted with the maxims of the genuine, that is, the elder, Bhudda of India; for, I believe the fecond to be a mere fiction fpringing up out of the Eaftern fyftem of the Metempfychofis and divine emanations; they muft have fome ideas of a triune Deity, intended in their motley theology; for, the Phœnician Taut, their famous Bhudda, if Suidas upon that word may be credited, had his furname of Trifmegift, from his decided affertions on that point of faith. Hence too his caduceus, which I have had engraved for the more particular infpection of the reader, is adorned with that old Egyptian fymbol of Deity, *the globe, wings, and ferpent.* Nor fhould it, on this fubject, be forgotten, that this caduceus is defcribed by the ancients as producing *three leaves* together, a facred trefoil, intimating the three-

fold

fold diſtinction in the Deity, for which he was ſo ſtrenuous an advocate. Thus Homer, in the Hymn to Mercury, calls it ῥαϐδον χρυσειην ΤΡΙΠΕΤΗΛΟΝ, the golden THREE-LEAFED wand.*

It is now high time that we ſhould leave the eaſtern confines of Aſia, and, bending our progreſs towards its weſtern extremeties, reſume our inveſtigation of the ſeveral Trinities of Greece.

* Vide Hymn. in Mercurium.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VII.

—— τι γαρ ἐςι Πλατων,
Ἠ Μωσης Ἀττικιζων;

The Chaldæan and Egyptian, being the Source of the GREEK, *Theology; the Doctrines relative to a Trinity taught by* PYTHAGORAS, PARMENIDES, *and* PLATO, *ought not to be wondered at, nor their true Allusion denied.— The extensive Travels of Pythagoras and Plato into the Higher Asia and Egypt detailed.— Their respective* TRINITIES, *and that of* PARMENIDES, NUMENIUS, *and the later Greek Philosophers, considered.— A retrospective Summary of the Whole of the Argument on the Christian and Pagan Trinities in the preceding Chapters.*

AFTER the numerous quotations, in the preceding pages, from the Grecian philosophers, most eminent in the Pagan world, quotations which demonstrate they were by no means unimpressed with notions on this point, similar to those entertained by the

 more

more ancient ſages of Aſia; I ſhall, perhaps, be excuſed from ſwelling theſe pages with an infinite number of paſſages that might be ſelected from the works of Pythagoras, Plato, Parmenides, and others, in additional proof of what has been already advanced on this ſubject. I muſt again repeat, that it was from the fountains of Chaldæan, Perſian, Indian, and Egyptian, learning, that thoſe Grecian ſages, as well by the channel of Orpheus as by their own perſonal travels in thoſe countries, derived that copious ſtream of theological knowledge, which was afterwards, by their diſciples, ſo widely diffuſed through Greece and Italy; having, therefore, ſucceſsfully explored the ſource, there is leſs occaſion for us to waſte our time in minutely tracing the deſcending current.

It may, with truth, be affirmed, that, there was ſcarcely one of all the celebrated philoſophers, who eſtabliſhed the ſeveral ſchools of Greece, diſtinguiſhed by their names, who had not reſided, for a conſiderable period, either in one or the other of the countries juſt mentioned. A production of the evidence, on which this aſſertion is founded, will probably be conſidered of no ſmall weight in this diſcuſſion.

Let us commence our retrofpect with the travels of Pythagoras, who flourifhed in the fixth century, before the birth of Chrift. According to the account of his difciple Jamblichus,* the firft voyage of Pythagoras, in purfuit of knowledge, after the completion of his academical exercifes at Samos, was to Sidon, his native place, where he was early initiated into all the myfterious rites and fciences of Phœnicia, a country whence, I have before obferved, the elder Taut emigrated to Egypt, and where the profound Samothracian orgia and the Cabiric rites were firft inftituted. From Phœnicia, our philofopher travelled into Egypt, and there, with an unabated avidity after fcience, as well as with unexampled perfeverance, continued, under the fevereft poffible difcipline, purpofely impofed upon him by the jealous priefts of that country, during *two-and-twenty years*, fucceffively to imbibe the ftream of knowledge at Heliopolis, at Memphis, and at Diofpolis, or Thebes. Aftonifhed at his exemplary patience and abftinence, the haughty Egyptian priefthood relaxed from their eftablifhed rule of never divulging the arcana of their theology to a ftranger; for, according to

 another

* Jamblichus, in Vita Pythag. cap. 13.

another writer of his life, Diogenes Laertius, he was admitted into the inmoſt adyta of their temples, and there was taught thoſe ſtupendous truths of their myſtic philoſophy, which were never before revealed to any foreigner.* He is ſaid even to have ſubmitted to circumciſion, that he might more rigidly conform to their dogmas, and leave no point of their moſt recondite ſciences unexplored. It was during this long reſidence and ſecluſion, amidſt the prieſts of the Thebais, that he aroſe to that high proficiency in geometrical and aſtronomical knowledge, to which no Greek before him had ever reached, and few ſince have attained.

But all this aggregate of Egyptian wiſdom could not ſatisfy the mind of Pythagoras, whoſe ardour for ſcience ſeems to have increaſed with the diſcouragements thrown in the way of his obtaining it. He had heard of the Chaldæan and Perſian Magi and the renowned Brachmanes of India, and he was impatient to explore the hallowed caves of the former and the conſecrated foreſts of the latter. He was meditating this delightful excurſion at the time that Cambyſes commenced his celebrated expedition againſt Egypt,

* Diogenes Laertius, lib. ii. p. 98.

Egypt, which terminated in the plunder of its treasuries, the slaughter of its gods, and the burning of its temples. During the remainder of the period of his abode in Egypt, he had the mortification to be a spectator of all those nameless indignities which his patrons and instructors underwent from that subverter of kingdoms and enemy of science. Pythagoras himself was taken prisoner, and sent with other captives to Babylon. The Chaldæan Magi, however, at that metropolis, received with transport the wandering son of science. All the sublime arcana inculcated in the ancient Chaldaic oracles, attributed to the elder Zoröaster, were now laid open to his view. He renewed, with intense ardour, those astronomical researches, in which the Babylonians so eminently excelled; and learned from them new ideas relative to the motions, power, property, and influences, of the heavenly bodies, as well as their situations in the heavens, and the vast periods they took to complete their revolutions.

Babylon must have been, at that particular period, the proudest and most honoured capital upon earth, since it is evident, from Dr. Hyde,* that both the prophet Ezekiel and

* See Hyde de Relig. vet. Pers. p. 361.

the ſecond Zoröaſter, the friend of Hyſtaſpes, whom Porphyry calls ZARATUS, (a name exceedingly ſimilar to the Oriental appellation of ZERATUSHT,) reſided there at the ſame time. The former, attached to the man who had ſubmitted in Egypt to one fundamental rite preſcribed by the Jewiſh law, inſtructed him in the awful principles of the Hebrew religion; the latter made him acquainted with the doctrines of the two predominant principles in nature, of GOOD and EVIL, and unfolded to his aſtoniſhed view all the ſtupendous myſteries of Mithra. Twelve years, according to Porphyry, were ſpent by Pythagoras in this renowned capital, from which, when he had regained his liberty, determined to complete his treaſure of Aſiatic literature, he ſought the diſtant, but celebrated, groves of the Brachmans of India.* Among that ſecluded and ſpeculative race, he probably carried to the higheſt point of perfection, attainable in that age, thoſe aſtronomical inveſtigations, to which he was ſo deeply devoted: by them he was probably inſtructed in the true ſyſtem of the univerſe, which, to this day, is diſtinguiſhed by his name: among them he greatly enlarged the limits of his metaphyſical

* Porphyrius, in Vitâ Pythag. p. 185, edit. Cantab.

metaphyſical knowledge: and from them he carried away the glorious doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, which he firſt divulged in Greece, and the fanciful doctrine of the Metempſychoſis.

Plato was born at Athens, in the 88th Olympiad, or about 430 years before Chriſt. He had the honour and advantage of having Socrates for the guide and preceptor of his youth. Already inſtructed in all the intricate doctrines of the Pythagorean philoſophy, on the death of that martyr to the cauſe of truth, he travelled firſt into Italy, and then into Egypt, as well to mitigate the anguiſh he felt at the loſs of ſo excellent and wiſe a man, as to increaſe the treaſures of knowledge with which his mind was already ſo amply ſtored. Cicero expreſsly informs us, that, in viſiting Egypt, his principal aim was to learn mathematics and eccleſiaſtical ſpeculations among the barbarians;* for, by this diſgraceful appellation, the faſtidious Greeks ſtigmatized all foreign nations. He travelled, ſays Valerius Maximus, over the whole of that country, informing himſelf, by means of the prieſts, during his progreſs, of geometry in all its various and multifold branches, as well as of

* Cicero de Finibus, cap. 5.

their aſtronomical obſervations: and, while the young ſtudents at Athens were inquiring for Plato, and languiſhing for his inſtructions, that philoſopher was indulging his contemplations on the ſhores of the Nile, ſurveying the canals cut from that river, and meaſuring the dams that reſtrained its riſing waters, being himſelf but a diſciple to the ſages of the Thebais.* From thoſe ſages, Pauſanias, in Meſſoniis, affirms he learned the immortality of the ſoul, and, from the ſtyle and tenor of his writings, it is pretty evident that he was deeply verſed in the ſacred books attributed to Hermes Triſmegiſt. It is equally evident that Plato had read with attention the Moſaic writings and hiſtory, not through the medium, as has been aſſerted, of the Greek tranſlation, (for, that tranſlation was not made till the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, which took place near two hundred years after the birth of Plato,) but by means of his own indefatigable exertion in acquiring languages and exploring the ſources of Oriental ſcience and traditions. Indeed the ſtudy of the Eaſtern languages, ſo neceſſary to a traveller in the Eaſt, and, in particular, the Egyptian and Phœnician, which differed only in dialect from

* Valerius Maximus, lib. viii. cap. 7.

from the Hebrew, cannot be ſuppoſed to be unattended to by a man fired with ſuch an inſatiable thirſt of learning as was Plato. Add to this, that, with the multitude of Jews, which, about that period of their diſſipation, flocked to Egypt, he could ſcarcely fail of frequently converſing, in order to penetrate into their ſacred records, and myſtic cabbala, ſo famous, but ſo little underſtood, throughout Aſia. The beſt evidence of this fact is to be found in his writings, where are to be met with ſuch repeated alluſions to what he denominates παλαιοι λογοι, ancient diſcourſes, or traditions, and certain Συϱιοι και Φοινικοι μυθοι, or Syrian and Phœnician fables, that it is impoſſible to conſider this philoſopher as not converſant in Hebrew antiquities. The contrary, in fact, was ſo manifeſt to Numenius, a Pythagorean philoſopher of the ſecond century, that, according to Clemens Alexandrinus, he exclaimed, Τι γαϱ ἐϛι Πλατων, ἢ Μωσης Ἀττικιζων; What is Plato but Moſes converſing in the language of Athens?*

Thus, in a curſory manner, have I traced the veſtigia of theſe two famous Greeks through thoſe countries where either the true theology was firſt propagated or firſt perverted. Let

* Clem. Alexand. Stromat. lib. i. p. 411, edit. Oxon.

Let us now proceed in a manner consistent with the brevity we profess to observe, after such a wide range through the schools of Asia, to examine the leading features of their respective systems of theology.

It will scarcely be contested that Pythagoras borrowed from the Egyptian priests, who were so deeply involved in symbols and hieroglyphics, that *symbolical* and *ænigmatical* way of instructing his disciples as to ethical and theological subjects, which he so universally adopted; and I shall, hereafter, when considering the literature of India, have occasion to prove that nearly all his most famous symbols have their origin, not in Grecian, but Oriental, ideas and manners. A similar observation holds good in respect to his veneration for sacred mystic *numbers*; for, when I inform the reader, that the ten numerical characters of arithmetic are originally of Indian, and not, as generally supposed, of Arabian, invention, he will entertain little doubt in what Eastern country he learned, in such perfection, that abstruse science. On that very particular and curious belief entertained both by Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, relative to the agency of good and evil DÆMONS, some attendant on the human race, as a kind of guardian

guardian and familiar ſpirit, one of which ſpecies, Socrates affirmed, attended himſelf and others, ſpleenful, malignant, and ever plotting their ruin, the ſource has been equally laid open in our review of the Chaldaic theurgy. It is, however, with thoſe ſublimer points in their theology, which have reference to the nature of God himſelf, that we have at preſent a more immediate concern.

This wiſe ancient ſtyled the ſupreme Deity the great Father of all, *το ἑν*, THE UNITY, and *μονας*, THE MONAD; a term by which Pythagoras doubtleſs intended to expreſs his conceptions of the *ſimplicity* as well as *purity* of the divine nature. The ſole cauſe and firſt principle of all that exiſts, he eſteemed the Deity the centre of unity and ſource of harmony. He likewiſe conferred on this almighty Sovereign the name, by which Plato afterwards diſtinguiſhed the firſt hypoſtaſis of his Triad, *το ἀγαθον*, *the chief good.* From this eternal MONAD, however, from this primæval UNITY, according to Pythagoras and all his diſciples, *there ſprang an infinite* DUALITY.* By the term duality, ſays the Chevalier Ramſay, the learned author of a Diſſertation on the Theology and Mythology of the Ancients, added

* Vide Diogenes Laertius, lib. viii. p. 507.

addded to the Travels of Cyrus, we are not to underſtand two perſons of the Chriſtian Trinity, but a world of intelligent and corporeal ſubſtances, which is the effect whereof *unity* is the cauſe.* When the reader, however, ſhall have duly reflected on ALL that has been previouſly ſubmitted to his conſideration in the former part of this volume, to the doctrine of which this Pythagorean ſentiment is ſo perfectly conſentaneous, he will probably be induced to think, that, by ſo remarkable an expreſſion, Pythagoras intended to allude to the emanation of beings of an order far ſuperior to thoſe referred to in the page of that writer. Beſides, as Dr. Cudworth has judiciouſly obſerved concerning the opinions of Pythagoras, ſince he is generally acknowledged to have followed the principles of the Orphic theology, whoſe Trinity we have ſeen, and, as is allowed by Chevalier Ramſay himſelf, was *Φως*, *Βȣλη*, *Ζωη*; or LIGHT, COUNSEL, and LIFE; it cannot reaſonably be doubted that he adopted this among the other doctrines of Orpheus.†

The three hypoſtaſes that form the Trinity of Plato, it is well known, are *το Αγαθον*, *Νȣς*, often

* See les Voyages de Cyrus, tom. ii. p. 193, edit. Rouen.

† Cudworth's Intellectual Syſtem, vol. i. p. 374.

often denominated by him Λογος, and Ψυχη κοσμȣ. When Plato, in various parts of his writings, calls his firſt hypoſtaſis, as he frequently does, ὁ πρωτος Θεος and ὁ μεγιςος Θεων, and uſes terms, with reſpect to the other two hypoſtaſes, which mark a kind of ſubordination in this his Trinity, it is ſcarcely poſſible to miſtake an alluſion ſo plain to the higher Triad for which we contend. The countries through which he travelled, and the people with whom he converſed, immediately point out the ſource of a doctrine ſo ſingular, flowing from the pen of an unenlightened Pagan. It is very probable, that, from his acquaintance with Egyptian, Phœnician, and other Oriental, languages, intimately connected with the ſacred dialect, this philoſopher derived the term Λογος, which is the ſecond in his Trinity; for Λογος, as has been frequently before remarked in theſe pages, is the literal tranſlation of the Chaldaic Mimra, the ſacred appellative by which the ancient paraphraſts invariably underſtand the Meſſiah. The notion is entirely Hebraic. The Meſſiah was called the Mimra, or Word, becauſe, in the Moſaic account of the creation, that expreſſion ſo frequently occurs, *et* DIXIT *Deus*, and therefore it was a very unjuſt accuſation (although, from

from his ignorance of the real fact, a very pardonable one) which Amelius, the Platonist, brought against St. John, when, having read the first verse of that evangelist, where the term Λογος occurs no less than three times, he complained that John had transferred into his Gospel the mysterious expression of his master, exclaiming, " By Jupiter, this barbarian agrees in sentiment with our Plato, and, like him, constitutes the Λογος of God in the rank of a first principle!"* The fact is that St. John made use of an ancient and appropriate term, by which the Messiah was known to the Hebrew race, whereas Plato made use of it, because the expression frequently occured in the exotic theology, which he had borrowed, without knowing either the original meaning or secondary allusion of the term.

It is still more probable, that the active divine agent, which, in the Mosaic writings, is called Πνευμα Θεȣ, is the same with that primæval principle, which, in reviewing the trismegistic theology of Hermes, we observed was denominated by a word similar to MIND, or INTELLIGENCE. This primitive principle is in the Orphic doctrines styled Ἔρως, Divine Love,

* Amelius citatus in Drusii Annotat. in John i. 1.

Love, generating all things; and, in the Platonic writings, with ſtill more marked alluſion to that ſupreme demiurgic Spirit, whoſe powerful breath infuſed into nature the firſt principles of life, is called Ψυχη κοσμυ, or the SOUL OF THE WORLD.

Parmenides, according to Stanley's authorities, was of Elea, a city of Magna Grecia, that gave its name to the Eleatic ſect, to which Parmenides belonged. He flouriſhed in the 89th Olympiad. Involved in nearly equal obſcurity with the incidents of his life are the doctrines which he taught; they were written in verſe, and the ſubſtance of them is given in Plato's Parmenides, the leaſt intelligible of that philoſopher's productions. Stanley has not illumined that abſtruſe treatiſe by the epitome which he has given of its contents.* To Simplicius and Plotinus poſterity is indebted for the beſt explication of the precepts of his philoſophy, in which, however, amidſt ſurrounding darkneſs, the veſtigia of this doctrine are to be diſcerned. Of that philoſophical theology the great and fundamental maxim was, that the Deity is ἑν και πολλα, or ONE and MANY; which words, if they do not allude to the *unity* of the divine Eſſence and the

* Stanley's Lives of the Philoſophers, p. 448.

the *plurality* of perſons in that Eſſence, it is difficult to decide to what they do allude. If the reader ſhould conceive, that, by this ſingular mode of expreſſing himſelf, Parmenides meant a phyſical, and not a divine, principle, Simplicius, cited by Cudworth, as an author well acquainted with that philoſopher's real opinions, will inform him otherwiſe, and that he wrote ἐ περι τȣ φυσικȣ ςοιχειȣ, ἀλλα περι τȣ αὐτȣ ὀντος; not concerning a phyſical element, but concerning the true ENS;* and I ſhall add to Cudworth's remarks on this ſubject, that the true ENS was no other than the Jehovah of the Hebrews, a word which Buxtorf (cited by me in a former page) aſſerts to mean ENS, EXISTENS, and whence, it is more than probable, the Greek word, deſcriptive of the divine entity, was derived. Plotinus, commenting on Plato's Parmenides, repreſents him as acknowledging THREE *divine unities ſubordinate*: το πρωτον ἐν το κυριωτερον ἐν, και δευτερον ἐν πολλα, λεγων· και τριτον, ἐν και πολλα: "the firſt unity being that which is moſt perfectly and properly ONE; the ſecond, that which is called by him ONE-MANY; and the third, that which is by him expreſſed ONE AND MANY." Plotinus then adds: και συμφωνος ȣτος και αὐτος ἐςι ταις

* Cudworth's Intellectual Syſtem, vol. i. p. 384.

ταις τρισιν: "so that he himself also (Parmenides) agreed in the acknowledgement of a TRIAD of archical hypostases."* The probable meaning of Parmenides in these distinctions is commented upon at length by Cudworth, to whom I must refer the reader for more particular information, while I finally pass on to the consideration of the ideas upon this subject of some others of the more distinguished philosophers of Greece.

One of the most express and clear of the ancient philosophers on this subject was Numenius, a Pythagorean, who flourished in the second century, and who, if Eusebius rightly represents his sentiments, wrote concerning Three Sovereign Deities. He makes the Second the Son of the First, and, by a coarse, but decisive, figure of speech, calls the Third Hypostasis, Ἀπογονος, *Grandson.*†

The Trinity of Plotinus very remarkably resembled Plato's, and consisted of το Ἑν, the One; Νυς, the Mind; and Ψυχη, the Soul; and these he denominates τρεις ἀρχικας ὑποςασεις, three archical or principal hypostases. The Trinity of Amelius, his contemporary, we

have

* Plotini Ennead. 5. lib. i. cap. 8.

† Vide Eusebius, Præp. Evang. lib. ii. p. 537; and Proclus in Timæo, lib. ii. p. 93.

have clearly ſeen in a former page, was a plain Trinity of perſons; for, he ſtyled them τρεις βασιλεις, three kings, and makes them all δημιυργυς, creators.* Porphyry called the firſt hypoſtaſis in his Trinity, in ſingular conformity to the notion of Chriſtians, τον Πατερα, the Father; his ſecond was Νυς, the Mind, like Plato's; but his third hypoſtaſis differed from Plato's and all that went before him; for, he denominated it not the Soul of the World, but a Soul ὑπερκοσμιος, above that of the world.†

There was an attempt made by Jamblichus, Proclus, and ſome of the later Platoniſts, to invalidate this venerable doctrine of Chriſtianity, by multiplying the number of the divine hypoſtaſes, and by exalting the το 'Αγαθον to an eminence far above the other two. Of this effort I ſhall only obſerve, that it proved as futile as it was malignant; and, having now, through a ſeries of ages, and a variety of countries, many of them very remote from each other, examined the hiſtory of both the Chriſtian and Pagan Trinities, and ſhewn the extent of this doctrine over all the Oriental world, I ſhall cloſe the prolonged digreſſion with

* Proclus, cited before in Timæo, p. 93.

† Proclus in Tim. p. 94 and 98.

with a few reflections that naturally result from the survey.

The first that forcibly strikes the mind is, that this doctrine could not be the invention of Plato, because it has been plainly proved, by accumulated evidence, to have existed in the Higher Asia, and particularly in India, a thousand years before Plato flourished; for, of that remote date are the Elephanta caverns, and the Indian history of the Mahabbarat, in which a plain Triad of Deity is alluded to and designated.

Of consequence, still more palpably false must be the assertion, that Justin Martyr, who had formerly been a Platonist, first imported it into the Christian church, from the writings of that philosopher, in the second century. We have seen that, in fact, this doctrine, long before Plato flourished, was admitted, but concealed, among the mystic cabbala of the rabbies; and, as undoubtedly one of the strongest, if not the *strongest*, of the arguments, adduced in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity being known and acknowledged by the ancient rabbies, is that deduced from the evident appearance of it in the Chaldee paraphrases, composed before the violent disputes on the subject broke forth, I have selected many

 striking

ſtriking paſſages from them, which, I imagine, cannot fail to have their due weight. I ſhall not, therefore, here enlarge farther on that head, but only inſert a remark omitted before, that the famous and frequently-cited paſſage in the Pſalms, *the Lord ſaid unto my Lord*, is tranſlated in the Targum, *the Lord ſaid unto his* WORD; which, if not underſtood of the ſecond hypoſtaſis, is inexplicable nonſenſe, and can be reſolved by no idiom whatever.

It is a circumſtance not leſs aſtoniſhing than true, that the Jews ſhould admit the miracles, while they deny the divinity, of Chriſt; for, the reader has been already informed, that, unable otherwiſe to account for the power which he exerted in working thoſe miracles, the reality of which they dare not deny, they are driven to the extremity of aſſerting that thoſe miracles were wrought by means of the TETRAGRAMMATON, which he ſtole out of the Holy of Holies. Now, their not denying his miracles is one great and decided proof of their having been really and publicly performed, and conſequently of his being the Meſſiah. Inſtead of that belief, however, to which impartial truth ſhould lead them, they obſtinately continue to call the crucified Jeſus the wicked Balaam, the prophetic impoſtor, who

who ſtole the TETRAGRAMMATON, and to whom they impute all the ſufferings of their nation, becauſe, as Abarbanel has it, "That deceiver impiouſly called himſelf the *Son of God.*"* Hence inflamed with intolerable hatred againſt Chriſtians, they remain almoſt totally ignorant of the leading principles of the Chriſtian religion and the foundations on which it reſts. And thus long are they likely to remain, while they continue to entertain the incongruous, the ſenſual, the abſurd, conceptions, which, at this day, prevail among them, relative to the imaginary being whom they have adorned with the enſigns and authority of the *true Meſſiah.*

There was an ancient and almoſt immemorial tradition among the Jews, that the world was to laſt only ſix thouſand years. They divided the ages, during which it was to continue, in the following manner. Two thouſand years were to elapſe before the law took place; two thouſand were to be paſſed under the law; and two thouſand under the Meſſiah. Indeed, this ſexmillennial duration of the world was, it is probable, too much the belief of the ancient fathers, who conceived, that, as the creation was formed in ſix days,

reckoning,

* See Baſnage, p. 254.

reckoning, according to that assertion in the Psalms, that every day is with God as a thousand years, and was concluded by a grand sabbath or day of almighty rest, so the world was ordained to last only during the revolution of six thousand years.

Time rolled on in its rapid and resistless career, and proved to them the fallacy of this ancient tradition. Still, however, their most celebrated rabbins continued calculating, by the course of the stars, the times of their great Messiah's expected advent. Repeated calculations of those times, and as repeated disappointments, have, at length, nearly plunged in despair the infatuated sons of Judah. Rabbi Abraham, who, in the year 1516, had found, engraved upon a wall, a very ancient prophecy, relative to that coming, had declared that the same star, which appeared when Joshua conquered the land of Canaan, and when Ezra brought back the people from Babylon, would again appear in the year 1529, when the Messiah might, for a certainty, be expected: but the prediction was by no means verified by the event, and the more recent Talmudic doctors, stung by this painful exposure of their credit, pray to God that the man who now presumes to calculate the times

of

of the Meſſiah may burſt aſunder, and that his bones may ſwell and break. Such is their ſtrong language in the Gemara. His coming, they aſſert, is ſtill delayed on account of the unrepented ſins of the people. When this conſtellation ſhall at length manifeſt itſelf, the moſt awful prodigies in nature are to precede his deſcent. The moſt ſanguinary wars ſhall deſolate the globe; a dew of blood ſhall fall down from heaven; plague and famine ſhall ravage the earth; and the moſt venomous reptiles and the moſt ſavage monſters of the deſert are to be let looſe on mankind. The ſun itſelf ſhall be turned into darkneſs and the moon into blood, according to Joel's prophecy, but, in thirty days, ſhall recover their priſtine brightneſs. "Men," ſays the Gemara, "formidable with two heads and numerous eyes, burning like fire, ſhall come from the extremities of the earth; and a powerful and deſpotic monarch finally prevailing ſhall govern the univerſe with a rod of iron."* His throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed in Rome, (a proof *at what period* they expected the Meſſiah,) but he ſhall reign only nine months, when the firſt Meſſiah, *the ſon of Joſeph*, as he is called in the Talmud, ſhall appear; and, routing

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* Gemara, Title Sanhedrim, *fol.* 52.

this tyrant with great ſlaughter, ſhall eſtabliſh a more righteous throne. This throne, though more righteous, is however to be ſcarcely leſs ſanguinary; for, in one battle, nearly two hundred thouſand combatants with their leader are to periſh. At length the great archangel Michael is to blowthree times the trumpet of heaven; and then *the deſire of nations*, the true Meſſiah, the Son of David, is to appear with the prophet Elijah by his ſide. All the Chriſtians and infidels then living are to be annihilated at the ſecond blaſt of that trumpet. All the virtuous deceaſed of the Jews, from the time of Moſes, are to riſe from their graves, and attend the Meſſiah to the renovated Jeruſalem, which, with its temple, is to be rebuilt with precious ſtones. A banquet of boundleſs magnificence is to be prepared for them, which is to be adorned with a Leviathan fatted of old for this feaſt of the bleſſed; with a female Behemoth, of exquiſite flavour; and with the bird BARIUCHNE, a bird of ſuch ſtupendous magnitude, that, when its wings are expanded, the orb of the ſun is darkened. Wine, treaſured up ever ſince the creation, in the vault of Adam, is to flow in abundant ſtreams; wine, of the rich vintage that commenced before the

the earth became defiled and cursed; wine, the flavour and spirit of which is not to be decayed, but improved, by its immense age. Such are the conceptions, reader, and others a thousand times more gross, of the Jewish nation relative to the grand banquet to take place on the Messiah's appearance. Basnage professes faithfully to have detailed these various circumstances from Maimonides, Abarbanel, and other celebrated rabbies, and from him I have copied the luxurious picture, to mark the corruption of their minds, and their carnal notions of those future pleasures which Christians believe to be purely spiritual.* Can we wonder, after this, at any mutilation or depravation of passages in Scripture by a race so sensual and so corrupt?

To resume the gravity which so solemn a subject requires, I must beg permission again to observe, that, on these mysterious points, which human reason cannot fathom, it is in vain that we make that reason the umpire. That finite man, however, can form no adequate conception of this great truth, by no means implies impossibility or contradiction in the thing itself. This circumstance arises from the limited nature of the human faculties.

* Basnage's History of the Jews, p. 373.

culties. It is mere ignorance; but it is an ignorance which we can never overcome. Let it ever be remembered, that Christianity by no means proposes to mankind a theological code, encumbered with no difficulties, involved in no perplexities. Its great mysterious truths are not to be solved by the light of nature, nor scanned by the boldest flight of human intellect. Neither the Trinity nor the Incarnation can be proved, nor were intended to be proved, by philosophical arguments. The word of God is the sole basis of the proofs and solutions of these stupendous doctrines. They are wisely shaded from our view, the better to excite in us the ardour of faith, and exercise the virtues necessary to obtain the sublime rewards which it proposes to persevering piety. The Almighty has been pleased to erect mounds and ramparts, as of old at Sinai, around the abode of his Majesty, to ward off the dangerous curiosity of man; he hath wrapped himself in clouds, that we might not be consumed by the full blaze of that glory which invests the eternal throne.

A

DISSERTATION

ON THE

PENANCES, SACRIFICES,

AND OTHER

PECULIAR SUPERSTITIOUS PRACTICES,

OF THE HINDOOS.

CHAPTER I

The Author takes a general retrospective Survey of the various Subjects previously discussed in the INDIAN ANTIQUITIES; *and apoligizes for the Desultoriness unavoidable in so vast a Field of Inquiry. — The theological System of the Brahmins, in many Respects, contradictory. —The necessary Result of the different Characters of their two principal Deities,* VEESHNU *and* SEEVA. *—Their respective Symbols, Rites, and Worship, described. —The subject historically investigated, and the varying Modes of Adoration paid them accounted for, by a Reference to the two great Sources whence they were probably derived, the benevolent Sons of* SHEM *and the gloomy Progeny of* CUSH.

HAVING now considered the Theology of India, under the general divisions into which that comprehensive system naturally branches itself forth; having, in the first place, investigated the nature of the mystic rites, celebrated by this superstitious race in consecrated groves and caverns; their devo-

tion, in every age, to the Sabian superstition, and veneration immemorially paid by them to the mundane elements, but principally to the all-pervading fire; having considered that religion in a physical, mythological, and moral, view, as well as in what points it resembled, or appeared to be connected with, the Egyptian, Persian, Grecian, and, finally, with our own more elevated, system of theology; I must now descend from more general observation to notice a few particulars by which it is distinguished from every other ecclesiastical establishment in the known world. A peculiar form of vestment and an appropriated mode of shaving the hair of the head and beard have distinguished most religious sects; but where in antient history do we find a race so infatuated as to suspend themselves aloft in cages, upon trees considered sacred, that they might not be infected by *touching the polluted earth*, refusing all sustenance but such as may keep the pulse of life just beating; or hanging aloft upon tenter-hooks, and voluntarily bearing inexpressible agonies; sometimes thrusting themselves by hundreds under the wheels of immense machines that carry about their unconscious gods, where they are instantly crushed to atoms; and, at other

times,

times, hurling themselves from precipices of stupendous height; now standing up to their necks in rivers, till rapacious alligators come and devour them; now burying themselves in snow till frozen to death; measuring with their naked bodies, trailed over burning sands, the ground lying between one pagoda and another, distant perhaps many leagues; or braving, with fixed eyes, the ardor of a meridian sun between the tropics; and all this in the transporting hope of immediately transmigrating into paradise? Where do we see an otherwise-polished nation staining their faces according to their different religious casts, and, I am inclined to believe, according to the imagined colour of the planets, with long strokes of saffron and vermilion: although sprung from one common head, yet divided into innumerable casts, each separated from the other by an eternal barrier; and all uniting to shun, as death, the contaminating intercourse of strangers? To detail these and many other curious particulars, relative to the Brahmin and Yogee penitents, will be the business of this last and concluding portion of the Indian Theology.

When, in the preceding Dissertation, I contended that the Indian Triad of Deity was

(what I firmly believe that Triad to be) *the corruption of a nobler doctrine*, and when I combated the idea of Seeva being the DESTROYING POWER, on the ground that their system of philosophical theology allows not of the destruction of any object in nature, I by no means intended to convey an idea that the Indians are not impressed with the most awful conceptions of God the Avenger. The dreadful catalogue of penances, enumerated above, and voluntarily endured to avert that vengeance, incontestibly proves the existence of those conceptions in their minds; and the religious rites at present in practice among them demonstrate that they consider Seeva as the delegated minister of the Almighty vengeance. On the subject of these and other *apparent* contradictions in the course of this work, I beg permission to offer one general, and not, I trust, inadequate, apology.

On a subject so extensive and so complex as the ANTIENT RELIGION OF INDIA, a religion so involved in the fables of mythology, so darkened by the deepest shades of superstition, and in the investigation of which such an ample scope must necessarily be allowed to opinion and conjecture, an exact arrangement

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of the various matter constantly rising for investigation could not always be preserved, nor unimpeachable accuracy of delineation be always expected. If, however, I have, in one page, represented the Indian religion as mild and benevolent, and, in another, as sanguinary and terrible, the inconsistency is not to be imputed to me, but to that religion itself, which has, in different ages, and under varying circumstances, altered her feature, her voice, and her gesture. Upon this account it is, that she presents to the inquirer a two-fold, or rather multi-fold, aspect; bearing alternately the smile of beauty and complacency and the frown of horror and deformity. At one time, arrayed in all the giant terrors of superstition, she appears, like a sable and vindictive DÆMON from NARAKA, to stalk in desolating fury over the continent of India, brandishing an uplifted scourge and clanking an iron chain, while after her are borne a band of famished YOGEES, stretched on the wheels of torture and languishing in various attitudes of penance. Her tone is high and menacing, her footsteps are marked with blood and her edicts are stamped with the characters of death. At another time, she wears the similitude of a beautiful and radiant

CHERUB

CHERUB from HEAVEN, bearing on her persuasive lips the accents of pardon and peace, and on her silken wings benefaction and blessing. Now, reserved and stately, she delights in pompous sacrifices and splendid oblations: she exults to see her altars decorated with brocade, and her images glittering with jewels; a numerous train of priests, gorgeously arrayed, officiating in her temples, and wafting around, from golden censers, the richest odours of the East. Again, she assumes a rustic garb, and arrays her aspect in festive smiles: she mingles in the jocund train of dancing girls that surround her altar, and will accept none but the simplest oblations, fruits, flowers, and honey. This difference of religious feature is of a nature consonant with the division of the HINDOOS, noticed before, into two grand sects; that of VEESHNU and that of SEEVA; and it may in part be accounted for by the different character of the patron-deities, the one, a mild and *preserving*, the other, to adopt the language and sentiments of the Brahmins, a fierce, vindictive, and *destroying*, deity!

But whence originally rose this astonishing contrariety of sentiment, this diametrical opposition of character, as wide asunder as

earth

earth from heaven, between the two great sects of India? Whence came that division itself, if, in reality, the Indians derived their descent from ONE COMMON ANCESTOR, and are universally bound by the laws of ONE GREAT LEGISLATOR? We have, from the authentic, the incontrovertible, evidence of Mr Orme, in one page, delineated the gentle Hindoo shuddering at the sight of blood,* and, upon that account, though skilled in all other branches of the medical science, totally ignorant of anatomical dissection; and we have, in another, from the equally incontrovertible evidence of Sir William Jones and Mr Wilkins, independently of antient classical authority, represented them as *profusely shedding* the blood of *men*, *bulls*, and *horses*, in sacrifice. Nay, even at this day certain tribes of the ferocious race of Mahrattas are more than suspected of secretly cherishing a number of human victims, the most remarkable for personal beauty that can possibly be obtained, and generally in the full vigour and bloom of youth, for the rites of the ALTAR; of fattening them like the stall-fed oxen for slaughter; and, on grand solemnities of festivity or grief, of actually offering up those unhappy

* See vol. ii. chap. 1.

unhappy victims to their gloomy goddess in all the pomp of that tremendous sacrifice.*

With diffidence natural to an author of unestablished character, who feels himself advancing upon dangerous and disputable ground, and yet engaged in the discussion of a variety of topics equally important and interesting, I have hitherto refrained from disclosing to the reader my real sentiments on so abstruse a subject, and from unfolding a system, of which the novelty might subject me to the charge of presumption, and the precariousness of it to the censures of critical severity. At the hazard of being at once accounted inconsistent in my assertion and incompetent to the discharge of that high historic function which I have, perhaps, too rashly adventured upon throughout this Dissertation, I have endeavoured, in various ways, and by suppositions, none of which, I am convinced, could appear by any means absolutely

* An intelligent gentleman, who resided some years in India, related this circumstance to me, and told me I might depend upon it for a FACT. Another gentleman, who filled a respectable civil office in one of our settlements, writes me word, that, one morning, while he was attending the duties of his station, a decapitated child was discovered at the door of a celebrated pagoda. On inquiry, it was found to be a sacrifice to avert some dreaded evil, and the father was the executioner.

lutely satisfactory or conclusive to a sensible reflecting mind, to account for the numerous contradictions pointed out, as well in the VEDAS themselves as in the principles and practices of the BRAMINS, and intended to reserve the final attempt to resolve the difficulty, till I should have reached that period of the early Hindoo history, when I knew an opportunity would offer for a complete developement of the plan, which I own, to myself, has ever appeared both plausible and defensible. My reasons for adopting it will be given at large in their proper place; and it is for the sake of perspicuity alone, during the remaining, and otherwise inexplicable, pages of the theological Dissertation, that I shall in this chapter briefly submit the outlines to the candid consideration of my readers.

It is, however, previously necessary that we should enter and more minutely explore the internal regions and decorations of those temples, an account of the external construction of which engrossed former portions of the Bramin theology. The Indians having broken their grand Triad into three separate deities, it remains that we consider the worship paid, at the present day, to each; their peculiar rites, the sacred utensils made use of, and

and the different oblations performed, in their respective temples. Thus will this curious subject, so far as it is yet known, be fully before the reader, and this final portion of it conclude to his entire satisfaction, when he is assured that nothing important, on a topic so interesting, has been omitted. Before it closes, however, an astonishing and stupendous scene will be unveiled to his view, such as no country beside ever witnessed, and no religion ever yet displayed to the contemplation of the philosopher.

In a former volume we left an innumerable multitude assembled, at sun-rise, before the door of a great pagoda, who, after having bathed in the tank of ablution below, and left their sandals on its margin, impatiently awaited the unfolding of those doors by the ministering Brahmins. Before they can enter, however, another indispensable ceremony takes place, which can only be performed by the hand of a Brahmin, and that is, the impressing of their foreheads with THE TILUK, or mark of different colours, as they may belong either to the sect of Veeshnu or Seeva. If the temple be that of Veeshnu, their foreheads are marked with a longitudinal line, and the colour used is vermilion; if it be the

temple

temple of Seeva, they are marked with a parallel line, and the colour used is turmeric or saffron. But these two grand sects being again subdivided into numerous classes, both the size and the shape of the TILUK are varied in proportion to their superior or inferior rank. In regard to the TILUK, I must observe, that it was a custom of very antient date in Asia to mark their servants in the forehead. It is alluded to in Ezekiel, ix. 4: where the Almighty commands his angel *to go through the city, and* SET A MARK ON THE FOREHEADS *of the men,* (his servants, the faithful,) *who sighed for the abominations committed in the midst thereof.** The same idea again occurs in the Revelations, vii. 31. *Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the* SERVANTS OF OUR GOD IN THEIR FOREHEADS. With respect to the colour with which the Hindoos are marked, I cannot but consider this rite as a remnant of the old Sabian superstition, in which, the reader has been informed, the Chaldæan devotees painted their idols according to the colour of the planet or star adored: and it seems to be no more than right that the servant of the deity should bear the same mark and be distinguished

* Consult Lowth and other commentators on this curious text.

guished by the same colour with which that deity was designated. In fact, all the idols of the Indian pagodas are at this day gaudily painted, and that paint is renovated by the priest whensoever he renews his devotion; for, speaking of the private pooja, or worship of the Indians in their houses, Mr Crauford informs us, that the Brahmin who performs the ceremony, occasionally ringing the bell and blowing the shell, " gives the TILUK, or mark on the forehead, to the idol, by dipping his right thumb in a mixture prepared for the purpose."* Indeed, Hamilton, giving us an account of the great stone idol of Jaggernaut, after saying he had two rich diamonds near the top to represent eyes, adds, that his nose and mouth were painted with vermilion; a proof that the Jaggernaut pogoda was erected to Veeshnu. I have no doubt that originally this mark was the mark of the hermetic cross, the celebrated symbol in all the Gentile world; and, for reasons which will hereafter be unfolded, I am induced to agree with Lowth, that the passage, above-cited from Ezekiel, originally stood, in the Septuagint, not *το σημειον, a mark*; but *Ταυ σημειον*, THE MARK TAU, or great T. Let us now enter

* Sketches, vol. i. p. 231.

enter the pagoda with the devout and purified Hindoo, and see him pay his obeisance to the Deity through the symbols that represent him.

Involved in darkness, scarcely less than the subterraneous caverns before-described, from having only one low door for the entrance, and filled with the most disgusting effluvia, arising from the stench of lamps kept continually burning and the oil used in the sacrifices, the Indian pagoda exhibits, on the first entrance, the appearance of a polluted dungeon, whose walls are covered with animals monstrous in shape and terrible in aspect. These, it was before observed, are symbolical representations of the attributes of the Deity; his WISDOM being represented by a circle of heads; his STRENGTH, by the elephant; his GLORY, by horns, imitative of the solar ray; his CREATIVE POWER, by the male of animals of a prolific kind, as the bull or goat; his BENEVOLENCE, by the sacred cow, whose milk nourishes the gentle Hindoo; while the combination of these animals or parts of animals was intended to designate his united wisdom, power, glory, and benevolence. Degrading, I observed, to the divine nature as these representations appear to be, and as they really

are, they are only such as might be expected from a race so deeply involved in physical researches as the Indian nation is known immemorially to have been; whose Brahmins, while they acknowledge the supreme Deity to have occasionally descended from heaven, and invested himself with a human, and even a bestial, form, have themselves opened a wide field for the allegorical designs which decorate their pagodas.

But, independently of these animal-figures, the symbols of the divine attributes, all the three great deities of India having wives, as, for instance, Brahma being married to Seraswati, Veeshnu to Lachsmi, and Seeva to Bhavani; and these wives, respectively producing a numerous offspring, is the occasion of their temples being filled with a thousand subordinate divinities, whose names and functions it would be an endless labour to repeat. The history of many of these mythological personages may be found in Sir William Jones's Dissertation in the Asiatic Researches on the gods of Greece, Italy, and India, and in the publication of M. Sonnerat. I shall still adhere to the great outlines only of the Hindoo faith, and principally confine myself to an account of the rites paid to the great Triad

collectively

collectively or separately. It is a circumstance equally curious as true, that there at this day exists throughout Hindostan scarcely any one temple sacred to Brahma, in his individual character of Creator; nor, though in honour of Veeshnu and Seeva numerous festivals crowd the Hindoo almanac, is one day peculiarly consecrated to Brahma. The Brahmins alone, in memorial of their original descent from Brahma, every morning, at sunrise, perform to his honour the ceremony of Sandivane, or ablution in the Ganges, or some sacred tank. In all other respects, his functions and worship seem to be absorbed in that of Veeshnu, in whose temples he is sculptured with four heads and four arms. The four heads, as often before explained, are symbols of the four elements and four quarters of the world. Some authors assert, they are allusive to the four VEDAS; but that is impossible, since, originally, there were but three of those sacred books. In one of the four hands, Brahma holds a CIRCLE, the mystic emblem of eternity; in another, FIRE, the just emblem of power pervading to the centre of that world which he made. With the two others he writes on OLLES, or Indian palm-leaves, possibly in token of his having given

the Hindoos the grand code of their theology, as Menu, who by Sonnerat is too often confounded with this personage, imparted to them the code of their laws. I shall not insult the reader's understanding with a ridiculous tale, told by M. Sonnerat, concerning the reason of his general neglect and degradation of Brahma, the supreme Creator.* With these mythologic details let the priests of India amuse their deluded followers. Such, however, being the fact, let us endeavour to explain the mystery in the best manner we can, and I humbly propose the following query for the solution of it: Do not the Hindoos mean to intimate, that, the great work of creation being completed, and every thing set in order and motion by the Almighty CREATIVE FIAT, the regulation and management of the world thus formed naturally devolved upon the PRESERVER?

The pagodas, consecrated either to the one or the other of these latter deities, are invariably adorned with two statues of the god, one without the temple, to which the people themselves present their offerings; the other, more

* See Sonnerat's Voyages, vol. i. p. 51, in which Brahma is degraded into a pedestal to support his fellow-deities, Veeshnu and Seeva.

more sacred and richly arrayed with cloth of gold and jewels, tenants the inmost sanctuary, and can only be approached by the officiating Brahmin. These images are generally made of stone or copper, painted and gilt; some are of solid gold, but few or none of silver. They had, formerly, for eyes, rich gems, rubies, or emeralds, but Mohammedan and European avarice united have obscured those more brilliant luminaries and glass ones have been substituted in their place. Tavernier tells a curious story of a certain goldsmith; who, secreting himself in the great pagoda of Jaggernaut, robbed the idol of one of his envied eyes. The story is exceedingly doubtful. However, the thief was not permitted by indignant Veeshnu long to enjoy a treasure obtained by such tremendous sacrilege; for, when the Brahmin opened the door the ensuing morning, and he attempted to go out of the pagoda, he was struck with death at the very threshold, when the stolen jewel was found upon him. Tavernier adds, that no goldsmith, nor can we wonder at it, was ever after suffered to enter that holy pagoda.*

Veeshnu is variously represented in his temples according to the different characters

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* Indian Travels, book iii. chap. ix. London, folio edit.

assumed by him in his Avatars or descents, but more generally by a human form with four arms. In one of his hands he bears a certain shell, or CHANQUE, as they denominate it on the Coromandel coast. It is the holy shell used in the rites of public worship, and its nine valves or foldings allude to his nine incarnations. Another bears the radiant CHACRA, described before, as instinct with life. A third grasps, sometimes a drawn sword, like that engraved in the plate of the Matsya Avatar, and sometimes a mace, or sceptre, broad and ponderous at the extremity, but tapering where the hand holds it. The fourth is unoccupied, and ready to assist those who call for the assistance of the heavenly *preserver*. Near him is constantly portrayed his GAROORI, or swift-winged bird, on which, in these benevolent expeditions, he is wafted through the air. According to M. Sonnerat, it is the eagle of Pondicherry, or the brisson;* he describes its head and neck as white and the rest of the body as of a dusky red colour. These birds are considered by the Brahmins as sacred, and are fed by them at stated periods, when the priests of Veeshnu summon them to their repast by the sound of two plates of copper

* Voyages, vol. i. p. 39.

copper struck against each other. There can scarcely be a doubt, as before-intimated, that Veeshnu, with his chacra and garoori, gave to the mythologists of Greece their Jupiter Tonans and his thunder-bearing eagle; whom, during the early commercial intercourse that subsisted between them, they might have seen thus designated in the Indian temples. I defer any particular account of the nine incarnations of Veeshnu, till the antient history of India shall commence, of which they form a very large and interesting portion. It is sufficient in this place to observe, that those incarnations — it is with reluctance I use the word, but there is no other that can convey my meaning, and it is used by Sir William Jones, and many other writers, who retain for the Christian doctrines the profoundest veneration — represent the Deity, descending in a human shape, either to accomplish certain aweful and important events, as, in the instance of the three first: to confound blaspheming vice, to subvert gigantic tyranny, and to avenge oppressed innocence, as in the five following: or, finally, as in the ninth, to establish a glorious system of benevolent institutions upon the ruins of a gloomy and sanguinary superstition. These, surely, are noble

actions; these are worthy of a god: and it is principally to these different descents of Veeshnu, and for such illustrious purposes, that all the allegorical sculpture and paintings of India have reference. The religion, therefore, of the Veeshnu sect is, as already has been observed, of a cheerful and social nature; theirs is the festive song, the sprightly dance, and the resounding cymbal: libations of milk and honey flow upon his altars; the gayest garlands decorate his statues; aromatic woods eternally burn before him; and the richest gums of the East disperse fragrance through the temples of THE PRESERVER.

Diametrically opposite to all this is the sombrous superstition of the relentless Seeva; a superstition darkened by gloomy terrors and ensanguined by excruciating penances. Seeva, however, is differently represented, according as the temple is consecrated to him in his avenging or in his re-productive capacity. I shall for the present consider him in the former character, in which he is portrayed with a fierce and menacing aspect; his features are distorted and his tongue is protruded from his mouth. He bears in his hand a trident, by whose three tines is symbolized FIRE, that destroys all things.

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On this subject I cannot forbear remarking, that it appears to me, in the course of these inquiries, that a species of superstition, very dissimilar in feature from that which prevailed on the shores of the peninsula of India, seems very early to have flourished in the remote and lofty regions of Upper Hindostan. It was a religion that delighted not in the sprightly notes of the tabor, nor was soothed with the melodions warbling of the dancing syrens of the pagoda. It was a religion of gloom and melancholy, that loved to act its unsocial rites in the solemn recesses of the deep forest, under the covert of the night, and by the pale light of Chandra, the conscious moon, that bore witness to the nocturnal orgies of the sequestered and penitentiary Saivites. Indeed, it can by no means be an object of wonder to any reader of reflection, who has travelled through the entertaining volume of Bernier to the secluded valley of Cashmire, a valley surrounded with mountains, the most stupendous in height and the most rugged in form, from whose lofty steeps a thousand cataracts on every side rush down into the peaceful bosom of that valley, that the mind of the Hindoo, intimidated by the grand and majestic objects with which he is encircled, should

should be the sport of superstitious terrors. The whole range of mountains, in most places, covered with eternal snow, that skirt Hindostan to the north, and rise one above the other in a style of horrid grandeur; and the vast and dreary deserts of Sirinagur, through the long extent of which the Ganges winds in its passage to Lower India; the impenetrable forests that in some places clothe those mountains, deepening the shadow thrown by them into the subjacent plains, and the steep abrupt denuded rocks that have braved the fury of every storm since the deluge; all together form a contrast, at which human nature may well shudder and by which human fortitude may be well staggered. These regions were a proper residence for the austere sect of the Saivites: men, accustomed to such gloomy objects, view religion and every other object through a false medium; the Deity is invested with the darkness which enwraps his works; they see him only in his dreadful attributes, they perpetually hear his aweful voice in the thunder, and contemplate him only in the storm that howls above them. They hasten, therefore, to propitiate him by unexampled severities, and they deluge his altars with sacrificial blood.

The investigation of this very curious, though unpleasing, subject, which I am about to consider, the detail of these penitentiary sufferings and voluntary sacrifices, instituted by timid superstition in the earliest ages of the world, opens a scene at once novel and interesting. So deep, however, in the abyss of time runs back the period to which I allude, so thick a veil hath oblivion diffused over the events of that distant era, that, at the present moment, I can scarcely collect any positive or connected intelligence relative to the nature of those mysterious orgies or the exact place of their celebration. It is evident, however, from the Ayeen Akbery, and the History of Ferishtah, that both *serpents* (that most antient symbol of the Deity in Egypt, to whose body, in their mysterious hieroglyphics, they added the head of the sharp-sighted hawk, to denote his all-observing vigilance in the government of the world) and *sacred fountains* were immemorially holden throughout Cashmire in the profoundest veneration. In a passage, cited before, it has been evinced, that in no less than 700 places of that province sculptured figures of serpents were worshipped; and that, at KEHROW, in the same province, 360 fountains, the number of the

the days of the antient year, before it was reformed by more accurate calculations, were sacred to the MOON. As the Moon is thus particularly mentioned, under the serpentine figure they probably adored the SUN; but since we read, in the same page of the Ayeen Akbery, that few venomous reptiles are to be found in the Subah, it is evident that they must have derived the superstition from some other country.* I am not, however, inclined to deduce it from any connection with Egypt, since the whole of this Dissertation tends to give the palm of originality to India rather than to Egypt, but from that country where the orbs of heaven, and the great serpent OB, or Python, were first venerated;† and where, according to Stanley on the Chaldaic philosophy, the whole system, both of morals and physics, was explained by perpetual allusions to *fountains*, imaginary or material, whose streams, like those of the Hebrew Sephiroth, were represented flowing into one another, and from whose mingled influences results the harmony both of the immaterial and material world.

Cashmire,

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 154.

† See Stanley, upon the Chaldaic philosophy.

Cashmire, which has been often called the terrestrial paradise, may indeed be justly denominated the *holy land of superstition.* In the Ayeen Akbery, forty-five places are stated to be dedicated to MAHADEO, sixty-four to VEESHNU, twenty-two to DURGA, and only three to BRAHMA. Many idolatrous temples also of brick or stone are said to be in Cashmire, of stupendous magnitude, and of unfathomable antiquity; some of them yet perfect, but many in ruins. Speaking of one of these near Bereng, the Persian historian says, "In the centre of the reservoir is an idol-temple of stone, a beautiful fabric. At this place, the devotees surround themselves with fire till they are reduced to ashes, imagining they are, by this act, pleasing the Deity."* In the same book, the cataract of Wiffy is particularized, which falls from the enormous altitude of 200 ells, with a noise that inspires awe and astonishment, and down which the devout Hindoos frequently precipitate themselves, thinking, again observes Abul Fazil, that, by thus ending their lives, they ensure to themselves reward in another life. Thus again are we led back by insensible degrees to the Metempsychosis, which, in fact, may be considered

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 158.

considered as the leading principle in the religion of India; a principle that at once fires the hopes of the virtuous and alarms, with unutterable terrors, the souls of the guilty.

To the powerful influence over the mind of accidental situations, dreary and romantic as those above-described, presenting to view the most aweful and even terrifying prospects in nature, much may be ascribed; and it is not to be wondered at, if, amidst such scenes, a religion of gloom and melancholy should be engendered and cherished. Since, however, the same severe rites are practised (though less extensively and generally) in regions of Hindostan, very remote from he forest of Gandharvas in the snowy mountains of Heemacot, or Imaus, on plains where the sun for ever shines and all nature looks smiling and gay, we must penetrate to a deeper source for the origin of this amazing difference between the festive rites of Veeshnu and the sombrous and blood-stained orgies of Seeva; we must explore the page of sacred history, and endeavour to trace out some primæval fountain whence the malady has flowed, and corrupted more than one half of a mighty nation. To solve the difficulty, we need not go to that

remote

remote period when the first murderer of the human race slew an amiable and unoffending brother. In the earliest events of the post-diluvian ages, and in the adverse principles of Shem and Ham, we shall find the baneful, and what I cannot avoid calling the *true*, source of this distinction of the Indians into two grand sects, each bearing a deadly and implacable hatred to each other; insomuch, that, when a follower of Veeshnu meets one of the sect of Seeva, he thinks himself polluted, and flies to some rite of purification for release from the foul stain. The colours of these two deities are as opposite as their opinions; for, Veeshnu, in the pagodas, is painted blue, while Seeva is white. Brahma differs from both, being painted of a red colour.

Having referred to those grand events that necessarily form the basis of all antient history, however unfashionable it may be with certain writers of a sceptical class to consider them as such, I shall now, as concisely as possible, unfold to the reader the plan upon which I have ventured to proceed in the arduous undertaking of writing the antient history of a country whose annals are so deeply involved in allegory and fable as those of India. He will not consider the detail as entirely digres-

sive, since the antient religion and the antient history of India are connected by an inseparable chain, many of the most venerated divinities of India being only their earliest sovereigns deified.

The astonishing population of the Indians as well as of the Chinese, their great advance in civilisation, and their cultivation of the sciences, at the most early periods which history records, offered to the historian, at his very outset, a difficulty so irreconcilable to the chronology of the Bible, that some intelligent writers have extended the Scripture-term ARARAT, upon the summit of which mountain the ark of NOAH is said to have rested, to that whole range of mountains which runs across Asia; and have maintained, that the said ark rested, not in Armenia, but on the Indian Caucasus, or one of the mountains to the north of India. In these Indian regions, according to RALEIGH,* but, in China, according to SHUCKFORD,† the virtuous patriarch planted the vine and established the first happy post-diluvian kingdom. Here, they assert,

* Consult Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World, book i. chap. vii. p. 74, ed. folio, 1677.

† See Shuckford's Connection of sacred and profane History, vol. i. p. 101, ed. oct. 1728.

sert, during the extended and peaceful reign of that great patriarch, the renovated genius of man had ample time and opportunity to improve and expand itself: here virtue exulted in the fostering smile of a pious sovereign, and science shot up vigorously beneath the protecting wing of power, invested at once with the PATERNAL, the PATRIARCHAL, and the REGAL, authority. The arguments, however, which have been adduced by these writers in favour of their darling hypothesis, and which I shall faithfully present to the reader in my History, are specious, but not solid; ingenious, but not convincing. If they possessed still greater speciousness and still more refined ingenuity, they would be totally inadmissible, since they oppose the tenor of that Sacred Book, by which all Christians are bound to regulate their belief, since they are repugnant to the whole stream of tradition, and since they are made in direct contradiction to an infinite variety of evidence, engraved on the medals and monuments of Asia, of undoubted authenticity and of the most venerable antiquity. The system which I have to propose, and which, from a few fragments in antient writers, I shall, in the Indian History, endeavour to establish, by no means opposes Scripture, violates

probability, or outrages common sense and received tradition. It reaches nearly the same end and establishes facts nearly similar, without referring to such harsh and improbable means; and, if it does not allow that extended point of latitude to the claims to remote antiquity of the Hindoo nation, which the former hypothesis does, in point of date, yet it falls only about a century short of that hypothesis. In fact, it nearly ascends to the utmost point of all genuine chronology in India, the commencement of the CALI-YUG, or present age of the world's duration.

For the outlines of the system which I have adopted, I profess myself indebted to the profound investigation of Mr BRYANT, concerning the migration and dispersion of nations. Throughout that most elaborate performance, I have endeavoured to avail myself of many useful and important hints, which the SOLID JUDGEMENT and DEEP ERUDITION of the author, when unwarped by a *brilliant fancy*, enable him to afford the historian. From arguments which I shall hereafter endeavour to extend and amplify, Mr BRYANT insists upon a migration of the several branches of the great family that survived the deluge, LONG ANTECEDENT to the con-

fusion

fusion of tongues at Babel and the consequent supposed dispersion of all mankind. That migration, he labours to demonstrate, took place, not from the plain of Shinar, but from the region of Ararat, where the ark rested. He contends, that neither the confusion of tongues nor the dispersion itself was *universal*, but would confine those two circumstances to the daring and rebellious race who were engaged in the erection of that stupendous monument of human ambition and folly, the tower of Babel. His arguments are particularly forcible on that point, so truly important, if indeed that point can be established on a solid basis in a historical inquiry like the present, concerning the antiquity and disputed priority of the different Asiatic nations: some authors contending for the superior antiquity of the Scythians or Tartars, some for the Chinese, and others for the Indians. Mr Bryant's idea is, that, by the term *confounding the language*, we ought to understand merely the confounding of the *lip* or mode of pronunciation; and this labial failure he afterwards explains, by describing it as an utter inability to speak clearly and intelligibly, an incapacity to articulate their words.*

* Analysis of Antient Mythology, vol. iii. p. 31.

With respect to the asserted dispersion of the human race from that spot over *the whole earth*, he avers from authorities, which I must also hereafter adduce, with some additional observations of an Indian kind, and relative to the Sanscreet annals, that the Hebrew word COL ARETZ, translated *the whole earth*, will likewise bear a very different translation: that the word COL is often used in the sense of *every*, and that ARETZ, though frequently meant to express the *earth*, occurs continually in the Old Testament in the signification of *land* or *province*; as in the remarkable and pertinent instance of Aretz Shinar, the land of Shinar; Aretz Canaan, the land of Canaan; Aretz Cush, the land of Cush; and, he observes, the Psalmist uses both the terms precisely in the sense here attributed to them. *Their sound is gone out into every land*; Col Aretz, in omnem terram.*

When I first commenced this undertaking, I ingenuously acknowledge that the *expensive* volumes of Mr Bryant were not in my possession; and, when I was at Oxford, I had but cursorily inspected that learned work. Convinced, however, that the pure primæval theology

* Psalm xix. verse 4.

logy of India, as described by Sir William Jones, and as, throughout this Dissertation, faithfully represented by myself, could only be derived from the genuine unadulterated principles that distinguished the virtuous line of SHEM, yet, staggered by the universal prevalence in India, as well in antient as in modern periods, of the gross and multiform idolatry of HAM, I remained for a long time involved in the deepest suspense and in the most painful perplexity. The farther I advanced in these Indian researches, the more striking appeared the contrast; the wider and more irreconcilable the difference. Educated, however, in principles that taught me to look to Chaldæa as to the PARENT-COUNTRY of the world, the nurse of rising arts, and the fountain whence human knowledge has flowed by various channels through all the kingdoms of the earth; at the same time, confounded by the authenticated accounts which have, within these few years, been imported into Europe, of the great proficiency of the Indians in the noblest and most abstruse sciences, when the greatest part of Asia had scarcely even emerged from barbarism, and when all Europe lay buried in intellectual darkness; I was just on the point of throwing away my pen and

giving up at least *the antient history of India* as involved in inextricable difficulties. The sacred records were silent about their origin; such accounts of them as were to be found in the best writers of antiquity, relative to their antient history, were often in the highest degree romantic and always unsatisfactory. All that the writers of the Universal History have related of the history of antient India is included in a few pages, and this portion of that voluminous work, from their consulting only the relations of the historians of Greece and Rome, who knew very little about them, is extremely defective. With few aids, therefore, from classical books, to assist me in this laborious disquisition concerning their antiquities, with little light to direct uncertain conjecture, and with little patronage, at first, to animate exertion, I should have laid by my pen in despair, but for the accidental attainment and revision, when nearly half these Dissertations were printed off, of the Analysis of Antient Mythology. As I was determined to advance no farther in a history, which, in some parts, had a seeming tendency to throw oblique reflections on the credit of the Mosaic system of theology, — that sublime system, which both inclination and profession made

me

me anxious to support, — unless I should be fully able to obviate those reflections, nothing could be more highly satisfactory to me, than to find the grand opening which the hypothesis, on which the Analysis was formed, unfolded towards the elucidation of so dark a subject, and that too in the third volume, a part of the work where serious history commences, where the conjectures of mythology are superseded by the evidence of well-attested facts, and the assertions of the sacred volume of truth are corroborated by incontrovertible testimonies from profane authors.

Following the line marked out by Mr Bryant, I contend, that the first migration of mankind from Ararat took place about a century after the appulse of the ark at BARIS, by which time, successive suns and winds, alternately exerting their force, might have rendered the earth sufficiently dry for the accomplishment of so distant a journey; that either NOAH himself, whose name is so clearly recognised in India by the Sanscreet appellative of MENU, (and it is remarkable that the Arabians at this day distinguish, as the Hebrews undoubtedly did, the patriarch by the name of NUH,) or, if not Noah himself, some descendant of Shem, gradually led on the first

colony, increasing as they journeyed eastward through Persia, to the western frontiers of India; that its first great capital was OUDE, in the province of Bahar, to the magnitude and extent of which city the antient records and traditions of India bear such repeated testimony; and that the second great inhabited city, equally celebrated in the most antient Hindoo annals, was Hastinapoor, where Judishter reigned, and in the neighbourhood of which, afterwards, was fought the great battle described in the Mahabbarat, in which sons and brothers, that is, the descendants of SHEM and HAM, perished in such a dreadful and promiscuous carnage; that this happy, this secluded, and increasing, colony flourished for a long succession of ages in primitive happiness and innocence; practised the purest rites of the grand patriarchal religion, without images and temples, the original devotion of Shem, the SON of GOD, who possibly was the genuine legislator of India, and in his regal capacity bore his father's title of MENU; that they assiduously cultivated all the sciences, and had also the use of the scientific records and astronomical observations of their ante-diluvian ancestors preserved in the ark; and that, ac-

cording

cording to the latest information imported into Europe in the Asiatic Researches, a colony emigrated about three thousand years ago from India; and, directing their march to regions still nearer the RISING SUN, established, on the most eastern boundary of Asia, the vast and celebrated empire of CHINA.

When the rising tower of Babel was overthrown (as the Orientals report) by storms, earthquakes, and whirlwinds, commissioned from the Almighty to level the fabric of man's exorbitant ambition; and when that fierce and presumptuous race, who had engaged in the mad undertaking of erecting it, were dispersed over the earth by the breath of God's displeasure, they turned the arm of violence, which had been impiously directed towards heaven itself, against the pious line of mortals who were its distinguished favourites upon earth. Under Nimrod, their daring chief, the mighty hunter before the Lord both of beasts and men, this desperate band of Cuthite robbers, (the GIANTS and TITANS of profane writers,) ejected by the signal vengeance of Providence from their own country of Babylon, first seised upon the dominions of ASSUR, the son of Shem. They then extended their ravages towards the beau-

tiful

uful regions of Persia, where Elam, another son of Shem, reigned: but, in this attempt, those sons of rapine met with a terrible repulse; for, the virtuous race of Shem, indignant at these repeated attacks from the base progeny of HAM, laid aside the native gentleness that distinguished their line, and, uniting their forces, after many severe engagements, and a contest protracted for a long series of years, so totally and finally subjected their opponents, that, we are told in Scripture, *they served*, that is, paid tribute, to their conquerors during *twelve years.* After this period, their restless ambition once more impelled them into acts of rebellion.* But, after a still longer war, and a still more bloody defeat, their power in that part of Asia was totally broken, or rather annihilated. They were driven thence into its most remote regions, even into those cold and gloomy Tartarian regions, which, from the darkness and fogginess of the atmosphere, as well as their forming the utmost boundary of the earth known to the Asiatics, was antiently considered as the abode of guilty and unclean spirits, and which, in the fabulous mythology of

* *Twelve years they served* CHEDARLAOMER, *and, in the thirteenth, they rebelled.* — Gen. ch. xii. v. 4.

of the Greeks, was represented as HELL ITSELF. Originally weakened and divided, by the great colony which early emigrated under their great ancestor to Egypt, the remaining posterity of Ham, though numerous, were not able to cope with four powerful and combined sovereigns of the house of Shem; but, rallying their scattered forces, they proved more than a match for *one* unwarlike branch of that illustrious line.

Far remote from this turbulent and sanguinary scene were situated the forefathers of the happy nation, whose history it will hereafter be my province to record. By nature inclined to peace and amity, and by long habitude attached to it, they neither suspected, nor were prepared for, the attack which the exiled and discomfited Cuthites were meditating upon their flourishing country and philosophic race. Collected in innumerable multitudes from all the hyperborean regions beyond Caucasus, regions called from them, as I have before remarked, Cutha, Scuthe, and Scythia; one party hovered, like a dark and angry cloud, over the clifts of that vast mountain, whence they frequently stretched their longing view over the Pisgah, which they were impatient to possess. Another party of

this

this intrepid tribe, which had taken possession of the tract on the west of the Indus, in after-times called also from them Indo-Scythia, waited only the signal from their brethren to pass that frontier river and rush upon the devoted Panjab of India. The former, as seems to be intimated by numerous passages which I shall hereafter cite from the Dionysiacs of Nonnus, as well as from Dionysius the geographer, pursuing the course of the GANGES through Sirinagur, a country whose frightful rocks had no power to dismay that progeny, to whom gloomy and terrible objects and deeds of extraordinary peril ever afforded a savage delight, entered Hindostan at the pass of HURDWAR and seised upon the rich and fertile region watered by that river. These assertions may appear presumptuous as they are novel; but the reader will recollect, that I am labouring to throw light on a dark and remote period, where all is doubt and conjecture. I shall give substantial reasons for adopting this system in my history. Two of those reasons only shall be mentioned at present. The first, and that which originally induced me to espouse the hypothesis and indulge the conjectures thus summarily stated, is, the relation which, from authentic Indian

books

books and traditions, the Ayeen Akbery* has given us of the immense extent and unequalled magnificence of the great city and kingdom of Oude in the most antient periods. The second is, that this very account is, in the fullest manner, corroborated by still stronger evidence adduced by me from Sir William Jones,† who informs us, that RAMA was the first Indian conqueror; that he extended his victories even to the Peninsula and Ceylon; that his capital was Oude, where he was venerated (by his own tribe and posterity) both as a KING and PROPHET; and that the present city of Lucknow was only *one of the gates* of that vast metropolis. There were, however, it must be observed, three heroes of the name of RAMA celebrated in the Indian annals; but, according to the last author, their splendid exploits may all be referred to this mighty son of CUSH.

The Cuthites, who entered India over the SEENDHU, probably pushed on and extended their conquests along the western regions of India, till they had established themselves in that famous city, which Ar-

rian

* See the Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 41.

† Asiatic Researches, vol. i.

rian says was the capital of the CUTHEI, *Sangara*; and which was afterwards taken by storm by Alexander. SHINAR, says Mr Bryant, is sometimes called Singar and Singara; and, it is not impossible, that, attached to that country from which they were so disgracefully driven, these successful invaders of India might give this name to their new metropolis, in memorial of their original country. The alteration of a letter is not material; for, D'Anville is inclined to think, that Sangania, a province of Guzzurat, may be the Sangara of Arrian, to which, however, I own Major Rennel urges a strong objection; and I only introduce the remark by way of observing, that, if this *were* in reality the Sangara of Arrian, the inhabitants have not at all swerved from their original character, since, according to Hamilton, they were, in his time, the greatest robbers and banditti on that whole coast, and they continue so to this day.

To relate the conflicts of rival colonies and contending nations is the business of history rather than of a treatise upon theology.— Suffice it then for the present to add, that, immediately after the great and decisive battle described in the Mahabbarat, the national theology,

theology, politics, and manners, experienced a total change. It was the immediate consequence of the triumph of the invading Cuthites, that all the degenerate superstitions of Ham, the worship of the PHALLUS, the veneration of SERPENTS, the adoration of the SOLAR ORB, HUMAN SACRIFICES, and every other Egyptian rite, the remarkable prevalence of which in India has so long perplexed the antiquary, commenced. Stupendous caverns were scooped from the bowels of the earth and vast pyramidal temples were erected upon its surface.

No nation upon earth, says the author of the Analysis, was ever so addicted to gloom and melancholy as these wandering sons of Ham. In consequence, the primitive, mild, and benignant, religion of Hindostan suddenly changed its feature, and the angel of benevolence, that before presided over and directed the public worship of the Diety, was converted into a dæmon, with an aspect replete with wrath and menacing vengeance. This alteration in the religious worship soon became visible in the appearance and manners of the people. The deep wrinkle of thought, and the pale cast of despair and melancholy, sat upon the countenance, formerly illumined with the

brightest

brightest ray of hope; while the eye, that once sparkled with holy transport, now sunk in all the languor of grief or became darkened with the scowl of mistrust. A tedious round of superstitious ceremonies usurped the place of genuine devotion. Modes of penance, the most frightful and excruciating, were established in the room of that heart-felt contrition which is at once most pleasing, and must prove most pacificatory, to a God of benignity and compassion. Emaciated with continued famine, and staggering through extreme weakness, in all the consecrated groves and forests of India, were seen the expiring victims of voluntary torture.* The temples echoed with the shrieks of penitentiary anguish, and the altars were deluged with a wanton poofusion both of human and bestial blood.

The deity himself, the great BRAHME, who the Indians were originally taught was a spirit, and that every symbolic representation must necessarily degrade him, was, in time, dishonoured by the most humiliating similitudes and delineated by the most monstrous sculptures. These sculptures, indeed, were

* In the Heetopades, the forest of the prophet Goutama is mentioned as the forest dedicated to acts of pénitential mortification. Heetopades, page 243.

were not all designed, nor executed, with equal want of skill. There is one on the Ganges highly deserving notice, of HAREE (a title of Veeshnu) sleeping on a vast serpent, both figures of exquisite workmanship; and the fabrication of which, as well as of the caverns of Salsette and Elephanta, on the two opposite shores of India, may justly be assigned to the remotest era of the Indian empire. It is thus described by Mr Wilkins, in his notes to the Heetopades; "Nearly opposite to Sultangunge, a considerable town in the province of Bahar, in the East Indies, there stands a rock of granite, forming a small island in the midst of the Ganges, known to Europeans by the name of the Rock of Jehangeery, which is highly worthy of the traveller's notice for a vast number of images carved in relief upon every part of its surface. Among the rest there is HAREE, of a gigantic size, recumbent upon a coiled serpent, whose heads, which are numerous, the artist has contrived to spread into a kind of conopy over the sleeping god; and from each of its mouths issues a forked tongue, seeming to threaten instant death to any whom rashness might prompt to disturb him. The whole figure

lies almost clear of the block on which it is hewn. It is finely imagined and executed with great skill."

It was the peculiar delight of this enterprising race to erect stupendous edifices; to excavate long subterraneous passages from the living rock; to form vast lakes; to extend over the hollow of adjoining mountains magnificent arches for aqueducts and bridges; in short, to attempt whatever was hazardous and difficult; and to carry into execution whatever appeared to the rest of mankind impracticable. Assyria and Egypt were covered with these wonders in sculpture and prodigies in art, which their daring genius and persevering industry executed. It was they who built the tower of Belus and raised the pyramids of Egypt; it was they who formed the grottoes near the Nile and scooped the caverns of Salsette and Elephanta. Their skill in mechanical powers, to this day, astonishes posterity, who are unable to conceive by what means stones, thirty, forty, and even sixty, feet in length and from twelve to twenty feet in breadth, could ever be reared to that wonderful point of elevation at which they were seen, by Pococke and Norden, in the ruined temples of Balbec and the Thebais.

Those

Those that compose the pagodas of India are scarcely less wonderful in magnitude and elevation, and they evidently display the bold architecture of the same indefatigable artificers. What we cannot allow to Mr D'Ancarville as to Semiramis, who probably was an imaginary being, or, if not imaginary, certainly never penetrated so far into India, may yet be allowed to the primeval ancestors of the nation over whom she governed.

Thus have I endeavoured to account, in a manner, I trust, somewhat more satisfactory than hitherto attempted, for the immense disparity and vicissitude subsisting, through successive ages, in sentiment and practice, between the Indians, or rather between the two great sects of Veeshnu and Seeva; between those who delight in bloody sacrifices and those who shudder at them. It appears to me the most plausible method for solving the historical difficulty, and the only certain clue for unravelling the theological mystery. Had Sir William Jones completed his strictures upon the origin and priority of the Asiatic nations, or fixed the central country in which, he seems to intimate, mankind were first settled, and from which, he asserts, all nations emigrated, I should have been enabled

to proceed with more confidence and less danger of error. It will be remembered, however, that the whole, which I thus offer, is professedly conjecture; and nothing could afford me greater pleasure than to renounce conjecture entirely upon so important a subject, and sacrifice hypothesis and opinion at the altar of truth.

CHAPTER II.

The peculiar Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies, of the BRAHMINS *detailed, and compared with the Accounts given by Greek and Roman Writers of the antient* BRACHMANES.—*Peculiar* FRUITS, GRAIN, SPICES, *and* AROMATICS, *used in* SACRIFICE *by the Brahmins; all remarkable for their great sanative Virtues or other distinguished Properties in the vegetable World.—The sacred* BELLS *and* CONQUES, *or* SHELLS, *immemorially used in Indian Temples, considered.—The Veneration of the Veeshnuvites for certain consecrated Stones.—The uncommon Splendor of the Indian* POOJA, *or Worship.—The* SACRED DANCE *of Antiquity considered, and the* MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS *made use of to animate that Dance.—The Whole compared with Egyptian, Hebrew, Syrian, and Greek, resembling Rites and Ceremonies.*

AFTER having, in the preceding chapter, unfolded the great outlines of the intended history, I proceed, in the present, to the consideration of other interesting circumstances,

stances, relative to the Brahmins, not yet detailed, with which, either their native books or the Greek and Roman writers have made us acquainted. On this point we may tread, with bolder footstep, the ground of classical antiquity.

Voluminous, and, in general, just, have been the disquisitions of antient classical writers, relative to the religious tenets, the severe habits, the exalted virtues, of this superior order or CAST of men. As the Brachmans (for so, in compliment to those writers, we must, for a short time, denominate them) were the guides of the people in religious, so were they the counsellors of the prince in civil, concerns; and, like the MAGI of Persia, they enjoyed this two-fold office by hereditary right. Their literary pursuits, therefore, were of various kinds; for, while some of those venerable sages made theology and philosophy their sole study, others, among them, added to those sciences very refined and profound speculations on the great social and political duties, and were versed in all the maxims of jurisprudence. In consequence of this, we meet with Brachmans at the courts of princes and Brachmans in the solitudes of the wilderness: but, whether we descend with

them into the recluse cell, or enter with them the solitary forest, where, as in the academic groves of Greece, the great mysteries of nature were investigated and the sublime truths of morality were inculcated; or whether we pursue their footsteps to the crowded city and the splendid palace where kings were proud to entertain them as their guests; the elevation of their genius and the dignity of their character appear alike conspicuous. The blameless tenour of their lives, the simplicity of their manners, their temperance, their chastity, their deep theological and political wisdom, secured the veneration of the vulgar, and awed even majesty, seated in splendour upon the imperial throne.

If the speech of Dindamis to Alexander, preserved for posterity by Bissæus,* be not the entire fabrication of the editor's fancy, it remains a wonderful proof of the deep reflection, the undaunted firmness, and the sound political wisdom, of the speaker. The Brachmans, indeed, in some instances, carried their practices of self-denial to such extreme lengths; endured the vicissitudes of a climate

 alternately,

* Thus Sir Edward Byshe, Clarencieux king-at-arms, in the reign of Charles the Second, and editor of Palladius and these very curious letters of Dindamis, styles himself.

alternately subject to the raging tempest and the scorching sun with such unshaken resolution; and courted, with such unabating zeal, every opportunity of shewing their contempt of life and what are usually thought its felicities; that we should be at a loss to account for the motives of a conduct so widely deviating from established rules, did we not know that the pride of human distinction and the impulsive ardour of emulation often stimulate mankind to the wildest and most extravagant eccentricities.

Placed, by the policy and partiality of the legislator, in a rank of life superior to their princes, despising the glare of wealth and the pageantry of courts, anxious for no food but the fruits of the earth, and thirsting for no beverage but that of the chrystal stream which watered his solitude; his passions restrained by his temperance and his ambition bounded by the paucity of his wants; the PRIEST of BRAHMA had nothing to distract his thoughts from the duties of his function. The instruction of the younger Brachmans; the numerous, the stated, and frequently-returning, rites of ablution and sacrifice; meditation on the perfections of the Deity in private; and acts of benevolence to his fellow-

creatures

creatures in public; occupied the whole of his well-spent day: while the night was consumed in prayer to his God and hymns to his praise, in the light slumbers which temperance bestows and in the solid peace which innocence enjoys. Such was the true Brachman of antiquity; and such, notwithstanding the general degradation of that sacred order, is the inoffensive life of many a modern Brahmin; who, remote from the cares and commerce of the world, offers up to heaven his devout orisons and bloodless oblations on the flowery borders of the KISTNA and on the luxuriant banks of the GANGES.

Diodorus Siculus* informs us, that the antient Brachmans acknowledged the whole system of their civil and religious policy to have been derived from Dionysius; that, in consequence of their veneration for that personage, who introduced at once the knowledge of arms and literature into India, divine rites were instituted in honour of him, and that many cities of India, in the language of the country, were called by his name. It is much to be lamented, that neither the Greeks who attended Alexander into India, nor those who were long connected with it under the Bactrian

* Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 124. Rhodoman.

trian princes, have left us any means of knowing what vernacular languages they found after their arrival in that empire. Pliny, in mentioning that the Indus was called by the natives Sindus, is almost the only instance of the kind. It was, however, without doubt, the Sanscreet, or, at least, a dialect of it. The evidence of this assertion is derived from various records and public inscriptions, since discovered, of antiquity almost coeval with that period, and of which more than one specimen is exhibited in the Asiatic Researches. Sir William Jones intimates his belief, that Bacchus, or Dionysos, as the Greeks denominated him, was the same deity as Rama before-mentioned. As I have devoted a particular portion of my history to the consideration of what the antients have asserted concerning the invasion of India by Bacchus, I shall not in this place anticipate what is there, perhaps in a more correct manner, related concerning the true origin and history of that celebrated personage. What those Brachmans related to the Grecians concerning their veneration for Bacchus, a Grecian divinity, might be artfully intended to conciliate the regard or to avert the vengeance of their conquerors: no great stress can therefore be laid on information

formation given under doubtful motives and propagated from a suspicious quarter. But the declaration, that many cities in India were called after that name, ought to lead to some discovery in regard to the real character alluded to under the name of Bacchus, or Dionysos. It is in vain, however, that we seek for any name analogous to these words in the places mentioned in the Indian history of this deity, if we except the two instances specified by Sir William Jones of Naishada, or Nysa, and Meru, the one a mountain and the other a city of northern India; but, if we cast our eyes over the map of Hindostan, or over Mr Rennel's most useful index to that map, we may find the appellative of Ram blended with a very large proportion of the proper names of cities and places in India, either as an initial or as a termination. Two places, distinguished by this name, near the southern extremity of the Malabar coast, which was the scene of his mightiest atchievements, when waging war with the giant Ravan, king of Lanca, have been already specified in a part of the Geographical Dissertation, to which may be added Ramasseram, an island situated between Ceylon and the continent celebrated for its pagoda, and much corroborative evidence

dence of a similar kind will hereafter be adduced, which apparently establishes, beyond a doubt, our position that Bacchus and Ram were the same persons. Not the least probable is a circumstance which I have not yet seen noticed, that the very name of Sesostris, the supposed Bacchus who invaded India, was Rameses or Ramestes. Indeed, if we allow the strong and reiterated assertion of Sir Isaac Newton, in his Chronology of antient Kingdoms, that Bacchus was the Egyptian Sesostris, to be well founded, the matter is at once decided; for, the more distinguished title by which that conqueror was denominated in the Egyptian records, and on the obelisks which Manetho saw, was RAMESES or RAMESTES.

The whole relation of Diodorus, as well as the relations of most of the antient classical writers, only tend to throw over the early history of India the veil of inextricable confusion. The readiest way of solving the enigma is to suppose, that, what the Indians related of their great hero and god RAM, the Greeks applied in their usual way to their equally-venerated warrior and divinity. In fact, if we examine with attention the peculiar religious ceremonies observed by this wonderful

derful cast, we shall find them, like all those before recapitulated, strangely tinctured with Egyptian manners; and, if the difficulty is not allowed to be solved by the plan I have above sketched out, we must wait for the full solution of the question from our indefatigable countrymen, who are so laudably busied in exploring the monuments of antiquity in Asia.

It is an invariable rule with the Brahmins to perform their devotions *three times* every day; at sun-rise, at noon, and at sun-set. This is a practice so entirely consonant with what Plutarch relates concerning the Egyptian priests, that I must be excused for once more adverting to his Isis and Osiris, especially as that writer adds some curious particulars relative to this triple adoration of the sun, or rather, as I conceive, of the Deity, who, our own Scriptures informs us, *posuit tabernaculum ejus in sole.* The Egyptians then resembled the Brahmins, not only in offering sacrifice and burning incense to the sun THREE TIMES in the day, but, in those sacrifices, they made use of such things as suited best with the nature of a worship involved in mystery, with their speculations in physics, and with their notions of health and personal purification.

Thus

Thus in the morning they threw into the sacred vase of incense a quantity of RESIN, whose subtle and penetrative vapour at once rarefied and refined the air, enveloped with the fogs of the past night, and cheered the spirits sunk down under oppression and languor from the same cause. At noon, he tells us, they burned MYRRH for incense, in order to dissipate the gross exhalations drawn up from the humid soil of Egypt by the intense heat of the vertical sun. MYRRH, he adds, is in the antient Egyptian dialect called BAL, which means the *dissipation of melancholy*; and that burning MYRRH, according to physicians, is the means of dispersing noxious vapours and often even of curing pestilential diseases occasioned by them, and was evidenced at Athens in the plague. The incense offered at the evening-sacrifice is composed of no less than sixteen different ingredients; not, says this writer, because the number of those ingredients forms the *square of a square*, and is the only number, which, having all its sides equal the one to the other, makes its perimeter equal to its area; but on account of the rich aromatic nature of those ingredients. The evening-incense formed of this mixture, the natives themselves call KUPHI. Now, re-

sinous

sinous gums, aromatic woods, and consecrated grasses of various kinds, are the usual oblations in the Indian temples. Our best myrrh is known to come from the East Indies and aloes is the favourite perfume of the inhabitants; but the richer and more extensive country of India producing a greater quantity of valuable drugs than Egypt, the altars of their gods are consequently covered with more abundant variety of precious offerings of this kind. It shall be our business to enumerate a few of them; and, in the first place, let us treat of the vegetable productions offered up in sacrifice and the occasion of their being devoted to the Deity.

Among the different sorts of consecrated grasses, fruits, and flowers, offered on the altars of India, may be numbered, the grasses called CUSA and HERBE by the Brahmins, both highly venerated for virtues which their sacred books describe;* the fruit of the mango, grains of gengely, the root and leaves of beetle, Indian spikenard, flowers of saffron, the herb bilva, renowned in Hindoo fables, and grains of all kinds, but particularly of rice in great abundance. These vegetable productions form a species of oblation the most antient

* See various preceding quotations from the Sacontala.

antient and pure of all others. To offer to the Deity the first-fruits of the tender herbage, springing up in the vernal season, and of the different kinds of grain and fruits matured by a warm sun, was the practice of mankind in the infancy of the world. The earliest instance of these oblations on record is that of Cain, the eldest son of the first great husbandman, who, doubtless, following paternal precedent, *brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord*, and of Abel, who also, to the sacred altar of God, *brought of the firstlings of his flock.* The Jews, whose religious customs are, in many respects, similar to the Hindoos, in every age and period of their empire, inviolably consecrated to heaven the first-fruits of *their oil, their wine, and their wheat*, and, by the divine institution, even *whatsoever opened the womb, whether of man or beast, was sacred to the Lord.** Such was the origin of oblations; they were the tribute of the human mind, overflowing with affection and gratitude to the all-bounteous Father.

There was, according to Porphyry,† a very curious and antient festival, annually celebrated at Athens to the honour of the SUN and

* See Numbers, xviii. 12, et seq.

† De abstinentia, p. 73.

and HOURS, which, in the simplicity of the offerings, remarkably resembled the practice of the first ages. During that festival, consecrated grass was carried about, in which the kernels of olives were wrapt up, together with figs, all kinds of pulse, oaken leaves with acorns, and cakes composed of the meal of wheat and barley, heaped up in a *pyramidal* form, allusive to the sun-beams that ripened the grain, as well as to the fire in which they were finally consumed. The festival was called Θαργήλιον, from Θαργηλια, a general word, says Archbishop Potter on this festival, for all the fruits of the earth.* The Indians, whose system of theology, in many respects, retains its primitive feature, although in others it has been deeply adulterated, have a variety of festivals sacred to Surya and his mythological progeny. There is one in particular, alluded to before, called Surya Pooja, or worship of the sun, which falls on the seventh day of the new moon in January; and, on which day, offerings of peculiar consecrated flowers are made to that deity.† On the first Thursday in the month of August

* The reader may consult Potter's Archæologia Greca, vol. i. p. 400.

† Holwell's Account of the Indian Festivals, part ii. p. 134.

falls the Pooja, or worship of Lachsmi, the goddess of abundance, or Ceres of Hindostan, whose altars are then decorated with oblations of PADDY, the name given to rice in the husk.* She has another grand festival on getting in the harvest, when she is universally adored with many solemn rites. These festivals I consider as of the most antient date of any existing in India, since the first is a plain relic of the oldest known superstition, and the others, probably, flourished ever since nature was bountiful and man was grateful. The Grecian festivals to the Sun and Ceres were probably instituted from them; and, hereafter, closer comparison and investigation may, perhaps, shew us, not only the Surya and Lachsmi, but many other Indian festivals, flourishing in Greece.

By degrees, the Indians, and mankind in general, advanced in the number and value of their oblations. From grasses, fruits, flowers, and grain, they proceeded to offer up rich aromatics; and, having experienced the purifying and healing virtues of many costly drugs, they burnt myrrh, aloes, benzoin, camphire, and sandal-wood, in the ever-flaming vase of sacrifice.

From

* Holwell's Account of the Indian Festivals, part ii. p. 127.

From these αρωματα, according to Porphyry, the censer, or pan, in which the Greeks burned incense, came to be called θυμιατηριον, and to perform sacrifice was called θυειν,' while the sacrifices themselves were denominated θυσιαι. Hence the Latin word THUS, frankincense, or, as it is sometimes used, incense in general. There can be little doubt that the Indians, in burning these woods, were actuated by the same motives which guided the Egyptian priests; viz: to administer to health as well as religion, since the numerous ablutions and purifications of the Hindoos demonstrate, that, like those priests, they thought the preservation of health a branch of religious duty.

But, to proceed in describing the progress of sacrificial rights, at least so far as India is concerned. They soon contrived to extract from these precious woods a rich essential oil, with the purest portion of which they proceeded to anoint the idols they adored. Oil of gengely, oil of cocoa-nut, oil of sandal-wood, and other expensive oils, during the continuance of the Pooja, or public worship, with their rich streams perpetually bathe the shining countenance of the Indian deity, and the stench, arising from a hundred burning lamps, is, for a moment, vanquished by the

more powerful effluvia of the most exquisite odours. I have before had occasion to mention the very high antiquity of this custom in the Oriental world, reaching up even to the time of the patriarch Jacob, *who poured oil upon the stone which he had set up for a pillar*, calling that pillar Beth-el, the house, or shrine, of God. From this conduct of the pious patriarch, I contended, came the pagan practice of consecrating certain sacred stones called BÆTYLI, anointing them with odoriferous oils and venerating them as divine oracles, oracles into which the Deity had deigned to descend, drawn down by the energy of prayer and the force of magical incantations.

The ardour of the devout Brahmin stops not here. Inured from his youth to rigid temperance, and unconscious to the guilty banquet of blood, he beholds with horror the flesh of slaughtered animals: he is principally cherished by the nutritious milk of the benevolent animal whom he considers as the emblem of the deity; and he feeds upon the pure honey elaborated by the industrious bee. H grateful heart, therefore, returns a tithe to heaven, and ample libations of milk and honey lave the sanctuary of his god. When

that

that milk becomes butter, a portion is set apart for the deity; but clarified, lest, during the process, any impurities should have been blended with it. With this clarified butter, or GHEE, as the Indians term it, upon grand festivities, the holy flame of the altar is fed, and numerous lamps, kindled around, blaze forth with purer splendour and more vigorous energy. The two following passages in the Sacontala, quoted, I believe, before, will evince at once the use, and the antiquity of the use, of this ingredient in the Indian sacrifices.— "My sweet child, there has been a happy omen: the young Brahmin, who officiated in our morning-sacrifice, though his sight was impeded by clouds of smoke, dropped the clarified butter into the very centre of the adorable flame." — "My best beloved, come and walk with me round the sacrificial fire. May these fires preserve thee! fires, which spring to their appointed stations on the holy hearth, and consume the consecrated wood, while the fresh blades of mysterious cusa-grass lie scattered around them! sacramental fires, which destroy sin with the rising fumes of clarified butter!" P. 47

It has already been observed, that one indispensable ceremony in the Indian Pooja is

the ringing of a small bell by the officiating Brahmin. We have also seen, that *the women of the idol*, or dancing-girls of the pagoda, have little golden bells fastened to their feet, the soft harmonious tinkling of which vibrates in unison with the exquisite melody of their voices.

The BELL, in fact, seems to have been a sacred utensil of very antient use in Asia. Golden bells formed a part of the ornaments of the pontifical robe of the Jewish high priest, with which he invested himself upon those grand and peculiar festivals, when he entered into the sanctuary. That robe was very magnificent; it was ordained to be of sky-blue, and the border of it, at the bottom, was adorned with pomegranates and gold bells intermixed equally and at equal distances. The use and intent of these bells are evident from the passage immediately following: *And it shall be upon Aaron to minister, and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.* Ezekiel, xxviii. 23. He was never to make his appearance before the shechinah of glory without this richly-ornamented tunic, and he was forbidden to wear it except when engaged in the most solemn

solemn rites of his ministry. The sound of the numerous bells, that covered the hem of his garment, gave notice to the assembled people that the most aweful ceremony of their religion had commenced, When arrayed in this garb, he bore into the sanctuary the vessel of incense. It was the signal to prostrate themselves before the Deity, and to commence those fervent ejaculations which were to ascend with the rich column of that incense to the throne of heaven.

Calmet has a curious article upon this subject of sacred bells.* He tells us that the antient kings of Persia, who, in fact, united in their own persons the regal and sacerdotal office, were accustomed to have the fringes of their robes adorned with pomegranates and golden bells: that the Arabian courtesans, like the Indian women, have little golden bells fastened round their legs, neck, and elbows, to the sound of which they dance before the king; and that the Arabian princesses wear golden rings on their fingers, to which little bells are suspended, as well as in the flowing tresses of their hair, that their superior rank may be known, and they them-

* See Calmet's Dictionary on the word BELL.

selves, in passing, receive the homage due to their exalted station.

To return from this digression to the sounding of sacred bells in the service of the Indian deities, I am of opinion, that there is another reason for the invariable use of them in the ceremonials of the pagoda. It is connected with their notions of evil dæmons, who are supposed to molest the devotee, in his religious exercises, by assuming frightful forms, in order to inspire terror into his soul. and detach his thoughts from the steady contemplation of the benignant numen. "O king," exclaim the terrified Brahmins in the Sacontala, "while we are beginning our evening-sacrifice, the figures of blood-thirsty dæmons, embrowned by clouds collected at the departure of day, glide over the sacred hearth and spread consternation around." P. 205.

The vibration of the sacred bell, however, was ever heard with horror by the malign dæmons, who fled at the sound; while the air, being put in motion by it, became purified of the infection which their presence imparted. From Asia, it is probable, that the bell, with a thousand concomitant superstitions, was imported into Europe and mingled with the rites of a purer religion. Every body knows

its

its importance in the Roman Catholic worship; the ceremony of anathematising with bell, book, and burning taper; and the thrilling sound of the dreadful *passing bell*, which not only warns the devout Christian to pray for the departing soul of his brother, and to prepare to meet his own doom,. but drives away, said the good Catholics of old time, those evil spirits that hover round the bed of the dying man, eager to seise their prey, or, at least, to molest and terrify the soul in its passage into eternal rest. Hence, possibly, the great price paid for tolling the great bell, whose aweful and portentous voice filled those perturbed spirits with increased astonishment and direr dismay, driving them far beyond the parish-bounds into distant charnel-vaults and other dreary subterraneous cavities. This detestation of the sound of bells, so natural to wicked dæmons that infest the atmosphere, is pointedly described in the Golden Legend, by W. de Worde: "It is said, the evill spirytes that ben in the regyon of th'ayre doubte moche when they here the belles rongen; and this is the cause why the belles ben rongen whan it thondreth, and whan grete tempeste and outrages of wether happen, to the ende that the feinds and wycked spirytes shold be abashed

abashed, and flee, and cease of the movyng of the tempeste."*

Mr Forbes, of Stanmore-Hill, in his elegant museum of Indian rarities, numbers two of the bells that have been used in devotion by the Brahmins. They are great curiosities, and one of them in particular appears to be of very high antiquity, in form very much resembling the cup of the lotos, and the tune of it is uncommonly soft and melodious. I could not avoid being deeply affected with the sound of an instrument which had been actually employed to kindle the flame of that superstition which I have attempted so extensively to unfold. My transported thoughts travelled back to the remote period when the Brahmin religion blazed forth in all its splendour in the caverns of Elephanta; I was, for a moment, entranced, and caught the ardour of enthusiasm. A tribe of venerable priests, arrayed in flowing stoles and decorated with high tiaras, seemed assembled around me; the mystic song of initiation vibrated in my ear; I breathed an air fragrant with the richest perfumes; and contemplated the deity in the fire that symbolised him.

With

* Golden Legend, p. 90.

With respect to the CONCH, or SHELL, blown during the Pooja by the Brahmins, I have not obtained the same advantage of personally examining it as I was able to procure in the case of the sacred bell, and can only assert. on the authority of a gentleman profoundly versed in the Hindoo mythology, that this venerated shell has, or ought to have, nine valves or foldings, in memorial of Veeshnu's nine past incarnations. The sacred instruments of antiquity have nearly all of them a mythological allusion. The cymbals, whose exquisite notes resounded during the celebration of the rites of the Grecian Rhea, were allegorical of the harmony that pervades universal nature, that nature of which she herself was the personification. The sistra of Isis in Egypt, with their three cross bars of gold, silver, or brass, denoted the *three elements* of nature, to a race who considered water only as the aërial element condensed. The violent agitation and rattling noise of these bars, when the sistra were shaken at her festival, pointed out the concussion of the primitive atoms and the elementary conflict that prevailed at the birth of nature. The conch of India, indicative of the nine incarnations of Veeshnu, naturally brings to our recollection the testudo,

or

or tortoiseshell, of which mercury formed his famous lyre, whose three strings had a mythological allusion to the three seasons that composed the Egyptian year, and were made of the sinews of Typhon, the evil genius, to shew that out of discord true harmony arises. This shell is always blown by the Brahmins in the same manner as the wind-instruments of the Jews; the *shaphar*, or trumpet, and the *jubal*, or ram's horn, during their religious ceremonies, were blown by the priests alone. When the walls of Jericho were miraculously overthrown, *seven priests blowing seven trumpets of rams horns* were commanded to make the circuit of that devoted city, at the terrific blast of which, on the seventh day, those walls were levelled with the dust.* These sacred instruments were supposed to be defiled by the breath of the vulgar Hindoo and the unpurified Hebrew. The aweful clangor announced the deity's descent to his throne upon the flaming altar, the ear of devotion was penetrated by the sound, and the eye of ecstasy was rivetted to the blaze. Even on the illumined summit of Sinai, when the true God descended in all the majesty of his glory to promulge the law, *the voice of the trumpet sounded*

long

* Joshua, vi. 20.

long and waxed louder and louder: and, we are farther told, that, at the dreadful day of final judgement for that law infringed, *the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the* TRUMP OF GOD.*

It is not, however, only the conch-shell that is venerated by the Brahmins; there is a certain stone of high mystical virtue and, for the same reason, consecrated to Veeshnu, called *Salagram,* in which the Hindoos imagine they discover nine different shades, emblematical of his nine incarnations. It is found in the river of Casi, a branch of the Ganges, is very heavy, oval or circular in its form, and in colour it is sometimes black and sometimes violet. Only a small cavity appears on the outside, but within it is hollow, and almost concave, being furnished in the interior coats above and below with spiral lines, which terminate in a point towards the centre. The superstitious Brahmins say, that they are formed by a small worm, which, working its way in the stone, prepares in its bosom a habitation for Veeshnu. Some of them find in these spiral lines the figure of his chacra.

These

* 1 Thess. iv. 16.

These stones are very rare and costly: when they are quite black, and represent the gracious transformations of Veeshnu, especially under that of Creeshna, a Sanscreet name signifying *black*, they are inestimable; but, when they are tinged with violet, and represent his angry incarnations, as under the form of a man-lion, or the Rama-Avatars, they are of less value; indeed, if M. Sonnerat may be credited, in that case, no common follower of the god dares to keep them in his house: the Sanaiassis alone, whose rigid penances have more sublimed their piety, are bold enough to carry them and to pay them their daily homage.

The Salagram is piously preserved in the temples of the Veeshnuvites, and is to them what the Lingam is to the Seevites. The ceremonies performed to these stones are nearly similar: they are equally borne about, as somewhat superlatively precious, in the purest white linen: they are washed every morning, anointed with oils, perfumed, and solemnly placed on the altar during divine worship, and happy are those favoured devotees who can quaff the sanctified water in which either has been bathed.

Let us return to the consideration of the other superstitions practised during the continuance of the Pooja. We have described the general appearance of the pagoda, on the first entrance, as that of a gloomy and polluted dungeon. The Pooja, however, no sooner commences, than the shades of darkness are turned to meridian splendor from the numerous lamps, offered in devotion, blazing with consecrated butter; and a thousand rich perfumes, mingling their various odours in the air, annihilate the disgusting smell of smoke and grease. Meanwhile, to the sound of the holy bell and the blown conch, succeeds the noise of cymbals and tabors, beaten by the Bayaderes, or dancing-girls, in the court of the pagoda, to the sound of their exquisitely-melodious voices, and in perfect unison with the little golden bells that ornament their feet and vibrate as they move.

I have before described* the education, habits, and accomplishments, of the Bayaderes; I have likewise intimated the marked resemblance existing between their unhappy practices and those of the prostitutes that thronged the porches of the Dea Syria, or Babylonian Venus. To trace this custom to its source, it

* Theological Dissert. vol. ii. p. 306.

it is necessary that we should again revert to the rites of that goddess; and that we deeper investigate her mysteries, which equally outraged decency and order, and which, uniting to, or rather congenial with, the base Hammonian idolatries, first contaminated the purer patriarchal theology prevalent in Asia.

One of the most curious and valuable tracts of a theological kind that have come down to us from the antients is the famous treatise of Lucian *de Deâ Syriâ.* The genius of that writer could assume any form; and if, in some instances, he was the *banterer* of the pagan religion, he was, in others, the grave *historian* of its most antient and venerable rites. In the treatise alluded to, there appears so different a spirit from that which animates his comic poetical essays, and there are such evident marks of credulous superstition, as to have induced some modern writers of credit to suppose him not to have been the author of it: a matter, however, which is too well attested to admit of a serious doubt. That treatise is more peculiarly valuable because it contains an accurate detail of the superstitious rites, celebrated in the most antient periods, and in the most renowned pagan temples, of the world; I mean those of Assyria, and the Venus

Urania

Urania just mentioned. To the short account given from Herodotus, in a former page, of the impure mysteries of the worship of this Uranian Venus, in regard to their public prostitution, I might have added, that, *possibly*, in Syria, was to be found the genuine origin both of the Indian and Egyptian Phallic worship; for, according to this author, at the very entrance of this most antient shrine, on each side of the portal, were conspicuously placed two enormous stone pillars, the usual symbols of that worship, on which an inscription informed the worshippers, that Bacchus, the Indian Rama, who was the son of Çush, had consecrated those Phallic pillars to Juno; that is, I suppose, to Juno, under the useful and important character of Lucina, in which she presided over child-birth. The part of this tract, to which I wish at present to call the reader's attention, is that in which Lucian acquaints us that the most solemn feast observed by the antient Syrians was celebrated at the vernal equinox, and it was denominated THE FEAST OF FIRE. It was holden at Hierapolis, or *the sacred city*, and thither, not only the inhabitants of Syria, but those of all the adjoining empires, Arabia, Phœnicia, and Babylon, in crowds resorted, bearing with them

 the

the idols worshipped in their respective countries, probably in token of subordination and respect to the superior Deity. At this festivity, every Bacchanalian extravagance was publicly allowed and encouraged; whole hecatombs of various animals were sacrificed, while the most precious gums and the most fragrant woods fed, day and night, the vast column of flame that continually ascended from the altar.

Every extreme of licentious mirth was then publicly allowed of and even encouraged. The priests of the lascivious goddess, whom, understood in a mythological point of view, I cannot but consider as a personification of Nature wantoning in her loveliest prime and arrayed in the beauty of the blooming spring, were transported with a divine fury, and some of them mutually scourged and wounded each other: others loudly smote the sacred instruments of music, and chanted forth prophetic hymns, accordant with their sonorous melody: but, what is remarkably singular at a festival that plainly alluded to *Nature* and the renovation of her powers, some of those unmanly priests, if Lucian may be credited, indecently arrayed themselves in female attire, submitting to the degradation of the emasculating

culating knife, and sacrificed to their protectress, not the symbolical, but the real, Phallus.* This practice can only be accounted for, either by that antient maxim of superstition, that whatsoever is most sacredly precious to mankind should be consecrated to the gods, and that we please him best when we make the most costly sacrifice; by supposing, that, in the perpetration of an act so abhorrent from nature, they intended to give public proof of a vow of perpetual virginity; or on account of a particular mythological reason which shall immediately be explained.

Those mythologists, who consider the Syrian goddess to be a personification of the earth, as Cybele, in Greece, doubtless was, rather than of nature, insist that her eunuch-priests allude to the barren state of that earth without cultivation. When considered in this point of view, they represent the noise of her beaten cymbals, which denote the globe, as allusive to the uproar which the warring winds, waters, and subterraneous fires, confined in its cavities, occasion, and which, convulsing its internal regions, produce earthquakes and volcanic eruptions; and the rattling of her brazen sistra they understand as figurative of the

 clashing

* Lucian de Dea Syria, p. 87.

clashing of the various instruments used in husbandry, which were composed of brass before iron was invented. It is, indeed, a principal object with Lucian in this treatise to demonstrate that the Rhea of Greece was the Dea Syria of the Babylonians; and he is doubtless right, since the very same species of worship, and the use of the very same instruments, have immemorially prevailed in India. His hypothesis, if admitted, only exhibits still more glaring proof how universally throughout the Pagan world a system of gross physics prevailed, and the earth was adored instead of its Creator.

I am still, however, inclined to the opinion of other mythologists who consider this celebrated deity, in the most extensive view of her character, as *universal nature* herself, which includes not only the earth but the whole circle of being; and though, when understood in this point of view, the mutilation of her priests may appear somewhat singular, there was another custom practised in her temple very consonant to this character, the consideration of which brings us back to the dancing-girls of India, who, we observed, are *public prostitutes*, and are denominated *women of the idol*. This custom, recorded with expressions

pressions of just indignation by Herodotus,* was, that all female votaries of this deity, once at least in their lives, should prostitute themselves to some stranger in the polluted porches of this temple. It had, says that historian, for this infamous purpose, a long range of galleries open on every side, that the passing stranger might more freely view the assembled fair, thus devoutly frail, and make his choice with unrestrained freedom. For the object of his choice he did not, like the proud sultan, throw the handkerchief of love, but a piece of silver coin, into her lap, which the severe laws of the country forbade her to refuse, as well as his embrace, however disgusting might be her lover. The wages of iniquity, thus menially obtained, were accounted *holy*, and were devoted to increase the treasures of this temple. Every female in that district without exception, the noble as well as ignoble, the princess and the peasant's wife, were alike obliged to go through this indispensable ceremony of *initiation* into the mysteries of Mylitta, with this difference only, that women of distinguished rank, with a numerous train of servants attending at some little distance, no doubt with the politic in-

* Herodot. lib. i. p. 60

tention to overawe any intruder of mean parentage from approaching the shrine of princely beauty, took their station in covered chariots at the gate. Such were the rites of the Syrian goddess; and the reader, by comparing the account with that of the Bayaderes in a preceding page, will find that the devotees of India are by no means behind those of Syria in the duty of sacrificing at the shrine of nature, either at the vernal or autumnal equinox.

Cybele, then, the mother of the gods, that is, the fruitful parent of all the Pagan theology, if Lucian may be credited, is no other than the Dea Syria. She is said to have invented the tympanum, or small drum, which she constantly carries in her hands, and Varro has told us, that, by that tympanum, the globe of the earth is designated, of which she was thought to be the animating principle. If that assertion be true, we cannot wonder at the constant use of it in the devotion of India, and it is a strong additional proof from what central country that devotion originally came, as well as to whom it has immediate reference; whether she be, in fact, the Indian Lachsmi, the goddess of abundance, or Bhavani, the softer deity who presides over love and genera-

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tion. In the frantic dance before her altars, pipes, or flutes, also, and tabors, formed a part of the sacred concert. In regard to the first of these instruments, I have only to remark, that, in most of the engravings of Veeshnu, in the form of Creeshna, that god is represented playing to the enamoured Gopias, or milk-maids of Mathura, on this melodious pastural instrument, a proof of the great antiquity of its use in India, and its invention is attributed to Hanumat, the Hindoo Pan, a famous general of the great Rama who conquered the world with an army of satyrs. Now, Hanumat was the son of Pavan, the Indian god of the winds,* and seems to have been well calculated, from this mythological birth, to become the inventor of musical modes and pastoral airs. The similarity of sound between the names Pavan and Pan might incline us to believe they both mean the same deity, that deity, *qui primus* (Pan) *calamos conjungere plures instituit.* A figure of the VINA, or Indian guitar, engraved in the Asiatic Researches, with some remarks upon its antiquity which accompany that engraving, demonstrate how early and assiduously the antient Indians cultivated music: indeed, at the

* Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 258.

antient period in which the Vedas were written, they must have had considerable skill in that science; for, like many parts of the Jewish Scriptures, they are written in a kind of metre, as if meant to be sung and accompanied with instruments; and, when properly read, I understand, they are chanted after the same manner as the Jewish Scriptures in the synagogues are chanted to this day. With respect to the tabor, the immemorial use of this instrument in India is proved by the circumstance of two of the mansions of the moon, in the Lunar Zodiac, being designated with this asterism, and very properly used they are to mark the nightly stages of that planetary deity, in whose festivals of the Νεομηνια, throughout every nation of the antient world, the cheerful sound of the tabor gave energy and animation to the midnight dance. The sacred dance itself, of antient periods, must now form the subject of extensive consideration.

Immoderate joy and pleasure naturally shew themselves in the air and gestures of the person affected by such sensations. His eye glistens, his cheek is flushed with crimson, and his feet spontaneously bound in accordance with the increased contraction and dilatation of

his

his palpitating heart. When religious fervour adds its stimulus to the excited passions, the transport is greater, in proportion to the sublimer nature of the object and the more animating prospect which celestial hope and inspiration unfold to the intellectual view.

Superstition stills heightens every colour, dazzles us with a false glare, and inflames the ardour of zeal to mental intoxication and phrenzy. Of the truth of the first assertion in the common concerns of life, we meet with daily and striking proof. Of the second, we have a memorable instance in David's laying by the majesty of the monarch and dancing in holy triumph and ecstacy before the ark, restored, after a long absence, to desponding Israel. Of the third, the rites of Mylitta at Babylon, the ravings of the furious priestess of Apollo at Delphi, and the Bacchic revels, are irrefragable testimonies. Besides these, however, there existed in antiquity a solemn and measured dance, more particularly instituted by the astronomical priests, which imitated the motion of the sun and planets in their respective orbits. This dance was divided into three parts, the *strophe*, the *antistrophe*, and that which was called *stationary*, or slow and scarcely perceptible motion before the altar.

altar. According to an antient author, *antiqui deorum laudes carminibus comprehensas circum aras eorum euntes canebant: cujus primum ambitum quem ingrediebantur ex parte dextra ϛροφην vocabant: reversionem autem sinistrorsum factam completo priore orbe αντιϛροφην appellabant. Dein in conspectu deorum soliti* consistere, *cantici reliqua consequebantur, appellantes id Epodon.** In the strophe, they danced from the right hand to the left, by which motion, Plutarch is of opinion, they meant to indicate the apparent motion of the heavens from east to west. In the antistrophe, they moved from the left to the right, an allusion to the motion of the planets from west to east; and, by the slow, or stationary, motion before the altar, the permanent stability of the earth. It was in the last situation that the ἐπωδη, or *ode after the dance*, was sung. I cannot, however, help being of opinion, that the antients knew something more of the true system of astronomy than this, and that, by the slow stationary, or hardly-perceptible, motion before the altar, they intended to denote either the revolution of the earth upon its axis or else the *solstitial period*; for, it is scarcely possible they could be acquainted with the revolution

* Vide Marius Victorinus, lib. i. p. 74.

tion of the sun (whose motions, I believe, they meant principally to represent) upon its own axis.

From another curious treatise of Lucian, expressly written upon this subject of the antient dances, I have, in the preface to this work, mentioned his account of the circular dance, used by the Indians when they paid their adorations to the sun.

The dance alluded to is undoubtedly that practised on the grand annual festival, holden in India, in honour of Veeshnu, in the form of Creeshna. It is called the Raas Jattra, literally the *dance of the circle*, and the following account of it may be found in Mr Holwell, on the Hindoo fasts and festivals. Creeshna is the Indian Apollo, and the exploits of this deity on the hallowed plains of Mathura will engross a very large portion of the antient Indian History. This feast, Mr Holwell informs us, falls on the full moon in October, and is universally observed throughout Hindostan; but in a most extraordinary manner at Bindoobund, in commemoration of a miraculous event which is fabled to have happened in the neighbourhood of that place. A number of virgins having assembled to celebrate in mirth and sport the descent of

Creeshna, in the height of their joy, the god himself appeared among them and proposed *a dance* to the jocund fair. They objected the want of partners with whom to form that dance; but Creeshna obviated the objection, by dividing himself (his rays) into as many portions as there were virgins, and thus every nymph had a Creeshna to attend her in the circular dance. Mr Holwell, the writer of this account, has illustrated his narration by an engraving; and, whether by accident or design, I cannot say, but the number of the virgins thus engaged is exactly *seven*, the number of the planets, while the radiant god himself stands in an easy, disengaged, attitude in the centre of the engraved table.* Thus early did the people of India know, and endeavour to represent, the harmonious dance of the planets; and, having imitated that dance, we cannot wonder at their attempting to imitate, also, while it was performing, the imagined music of the spheres.

Although neither musical instruments nor dancing are particularly ordained in the Levitical law to be employed by the Hebrews in religious worship, there can be little doubt of both having been very antiently in use among them.

* See Holwell's Indian Festivals, part ii. p. 132.

them. A very early instance of it we find almost immediately after their exodus from Egypt: for, after Moses and the children of Israel had finished singing that sublime song, which he composed upon the miraculous overthrow of Pharoah, we are told, that *Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a* TIMBREL *in her hand; and all the women went out after her with* TIMBRELS *and with* DANCES.* It is impossible to consider this band otherwise than as a sacred chorus of dancing-women, differing only from the Indian women, as being strictly and exemplarily virtuous, with the priestess or prophetess at their head, the leader of that band. Their song, indeed, was truly sacred, being in honour of the Omnipotent Jehovah himself; since *Miriam answered them, sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*† And this, perhaps, was the first consecration in the world of the measured step and the triumphant song to the true God. Too swiftly, alas! and deeply were they dishonoured, when, forgetting their great Deliverer, this infatuated progeny afterwards prostrated themselves, in idolatrous worship, before the golden calf, the symbol of Osiris,

* Exodus, xv. 20. † Ibid

Osiris, and began to dance and sing around the altar of that base Egyptian deity. In the succeeding periods of their empire, during the national festivities, we read of the hallowed dance to the sound of sacred music constantly taking place. When the ark was brought back from Kirjath-Jarim to Jerusalem *the singers went before*, (conjuncti psallentibus, reads the Æthiopic version,) *the players on instruments followed after*; (that is, with steps modulated to the music of those instruments;) *among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.* Psalm lxviii. 25. David seems from his youth to have been devoted to music, and greatly multiplied the musicians and singers employed in religious service. Most of those beautiful and pathetic compositions, which we call the Psalms, were the productions of that monarch's genius and piety united. The titles prefixed to them shew them to be addressed to the different presidents of the bands of musicians, to be set to the different instruments of which they respectively had the charge; and those bands, we are told, amounted to twenty-four in number. When Solomon erected his most magnificent temple, the pomp and splendour of the public worship at Jerusalem were vastly increased, and the musical

sical establishments instituted by David were considerably enlarged. There were, on the whole, no less than four-and-twenty thousand Levites who had offices assigned them in that superb temple. Four thousand of these were appointed to the function of public singers, who, aiding with their numerous voices the loud JUBAL, or great Hebrew trumpet, and the solemn HASAR, or instrument of ten strings, contributed on grand occasions to swell the pomp of the Hebrew devotion, and raise it to a point of exaltation and distinction among the nations, in some degree correspondent to the superior majesty and purity of the God they adored. Hence, when that temple was destroyed, and the Jewish nation carried away captive to Babylon, originated those repeated taunts thrown out by their insulting victors, *Sing us one of the songs of Zion!* Psalm cxxxvii. 3. The desponding sons of Judah, however, are beautifully described in the Psalm just cited, as having hung the neglected KINNOR, or harp of Palestine, on the willows that grow plentifully on the banks of the Euphrates, and as pathetically exclaiming, *How can we sing the song of Jehovah in the land of strangers?* Even when groaning under the chains of their captivity,

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they seem not to have entirely neglected that fascinating science which David had so zealously promoted among them and Solomon had so considerably improved; for, in the list which is given by Ezra of those who returned with him from Babylon, there are numbered *two hundred singing-men and singing-women.* Ezra, ii. 65. The principal difference between the Jewish dancing-women, and those employed in the Assyrian, Egyptian, and Indian, temples, consists, as has been intimated before, in the immaculate and virgin purity of the former, and the licentious, and even libidinous, character of the latter. That difference is to be explained by an investigation into the nature and attributes of the deities respectively adored in those countries. The gods of the latter were gross physical deities, nature and its various powers personified. The sublime object of the adoration of the Hebrews was THE GOD OF NATURE HIMSELF.

The account which a recent traveller, M. Savary, gives of the present Almai, or dancing-girls of Egypt, is very curious and highly deserving attention, because in manners and habits they exactly correspond with those of India. It is in the fourteenth letter of his first volume on Egypt, and I shall trouble the

the reader with a pretty considerable extract from it.

"The Almai," says M. Savary, "form a class very famous in this country, to be admitted into which it is necessary to possess beauty, a fine voice, eloquence, and be able to compose and sing extempore verses, adapted to the occasion. The Almai know all new songs by rote, their memory is stored with the best funeral and love songs; they are present at all festivals, and are the chief ornament of banquets. They place them in a raised orchestra, or pulpit, where they sing during the feast: after which they descend and form dances, which no way resemble ours. They are pantomimes that represent the common incidents of life. Love is their usual subject. The suppleness of these dancers bodies is inconceivable, and the flexibility of their features, which take impressions characteristic of the parts they play at will, astonishing. The indecency, however, of their attitudes is often excessive; each look, each gesture, speaks, and in a manner so forcible as not possibly to be misunderstood. They throw aside modesty with their veils. When they begin to dance, a long and very light silken robe floats on the ground, negligently girded by a sash; long black hair,

perfumed and in tresses, descends over their shoulders; the shift, transparent as gauze, scarcely conceals the skin. As the action proceeds, the various forms and contours the body can assume seem progressive; the sound of the flute, the castanets, the tambour de basque, and cymbals, regulate, increase, or slacken, their steps. Words, adapted to such like scenes, inflame them more, till they appear intoxicated and become frantic Bacchantes. Forgetting all reserve, they then wholly abandon themselves to the disorder of their senses, while an indelicate people, who wish nothing should be left to the imagination, redouble their applause.

" These Almai are admitted into all harams; they teach the women the new airs, recount amorous tales, and recite poems, in their presence, which are interesting by being pictures of their own manners. They teach them the mysteries of their art and instruct them in lascivious dances. The minds of these women are cultivated, their conversation agreeable; they speak their language with purity, and, habitually addicting themselves to poetry, learn the most winning and sonorous modes of expression. Their recital is very graceful: when they sing, nature is their only guide: some of the

the airs I have heard from them were gay, and in a light and lively measure, like some of ours; but their excellence is most seen in the pathetic. When they rehearse a moal, in the manner of the antient tragic ballad, by dwelling upon affecting and plaintive tones, they inspire melancholy, which insensibly augments till it melts in tears. The very Turks, enemies as they are to the arts, the Turks themselves, pass whole nights in listening to them. Two people sing together sometimes, but, like their orchestra, they are always in unison: accompaniments in music are only for enlightened nations; who while melody charms the ear, wish to have the mind employed by a just and inventive modulation. Nations, on the contrary, whose feelings are oftener appealed to than their understanding, little capable of catching the fleeting beauties of harmony, delight in those simple sounds which immediately attack the heart, without calling in the aid of reflection to increase sensibility."

The Israelites, to whom Egyptian manners, by their long dwelling in Egypt, were become natural, also had their Almai. At Jerusalem, as at Cairo, women were taught to move in graceful measure. St Mark relates a fact which proves

the power of the Oriental dance over the heart of man.

And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birth-day made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? and she said, The head of John the Baptist.

And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by the head of John the Baptist.

And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought; and he went and beheaded him in the prison.

It may, I think, be depended upon, that the ancestors of these Almai had their parts assigned them in the antient religious festivals of Egypt; the flutes, the tambours, and the cymbals, were the very instruments used in the rites of Isis. When those rites were im-

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ported into Greece, and Ceres usurped the honours of Isis, the Greeks carried the sacred as well as the social dance to the highest point of attainable perfection. They made use of the varied dance, not only to animate devotion, but to excite valour and terrify guilt. The Pyrrhic dance of the Spartans was performed by youths armed cap-a-pee, who brandished aloft their swords and darted their javelins to the sound of martial music. It is unnecessary, in this place, to enter into any particular account of the frantic revels of the Bacchantes, during the dance sacred to their festive deity; when his votaries of both sexes resigned themselves to boundless licentiousness; when wildly tossing about their thyrsi, with their hair dishevelled and furious gesticulation, they rushed, by torch-light, through the streets, committing every species of mirthful extravagance, and making the capital of Greece resound with thundering acclamations of Ευοι Βακχε! The dance of he Eumenides, or Furies, on the stage of Athens, was not less frantic, but impressed a different sentiment; that of irresistible terror. The minds of the astonished spectators were agitated with a dreadful alternation of passion; rage, anguish, and dismay. The valiant veteran, who had a

thousand times braved death in the field of battle, trembled while it was performing. A great part of the scared multitude rushed with precipitation from the theatre and outcries of horror were heard on every side. The remaining audience, who had courage to witness the exhibition, appalled at the scenes which were acting, imagined they saw in earnest those terrific deities, the ministers of eternal justice, armed with the vengeance of heaven and commissioned to pursue and punish crimes upon earth.

I have already, with as much delicacy as was consistent with perspicuity, informed the reader that Seeva is sometimes represented by emblems that express, in that mythological deity, the union of the two sexes, in which sense he may be called Αρρενοθηλυς, or male and female; an idea, which, it has before been observed, is not peculiar to India, but runs through all the mystic writers of antiquity, and alludes to the productive fecundity inherent in the divine nature. The glaring symbols of it are too evident in every pagoda of this physical race, and the frequency of them impresses strangers with mistaken notions of their being a people immersed in boundless profligacy of manners, which is by no means

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the case. In this, his genial character, Parvati, another term for Bhavani and Durga, is allotted him for a consort, or, rather, is only one part of himself. Under these two forms, says M. Sonnerat, he is adored by the name of Parachiven and Parasati. In some temples these two figures are separate; but, in others, they are joined together, and compose one figure, half man and half women. The principal temple of Seeva, under this combined image, is at Tirounomalcy.

In forming these conceptions, and in combining these images, I am ready to admit that mythology has had considerable influence; yet, am I not without strong suspicion, that the whole of this ANDROGYNOUS system is founded upon mistaken tradition, similar to that occurring in the writings of some rabbinical doctors, and founded on a false interpretation of a verse in Genesis, that God, at the beginning, created man of both sexes; *male and female created he them.* So far distant are the zealous adorers of Seeva, in this capacity, from being of a licentious character, that none of his votaries are doomed to a more rigid purity than these: they have all the frozen chastity of Atys, the well-beloved of Cybele, with this difference, that they retain

the ability, which Atys wanted, of violating the vow of perpetual virginity. In fact, by the force of severe penances and habitual abstinence, some of them entirely vanquish the ebullition of natural desire; while others, by deadly stupifying drugs, lock up all the springs of genial passion and are absorbed in holy insensibility. The necessity for their arriving at this state of invincible apathy must be evident to those who consider the danger of these devotees, who appear constantly in public without the smallest covering, and in whom the least apparent deviation from their profession of entire abstraction in spiritual objects would be considered as an unpardonable crime; a crime for which they would be infallibly stoned to death by the enraged populace. These people bear the disgusting but too-expressive symbol of their god around their neck or fastened to their arm; and they rub the forehead, breast, and shoulders, with ashes of cow-dung. They use cow-dung. I presume, because it is the medium by which the barren soil is rendered prolific, and therefore reminds them of the famous Indian doctrine of corruption and re-production. They use it burnt to ashes, because fire is another emblem of Seeva, as a destroyer, and it is fire

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that will finally reduce to ashes "the cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself, and all which it inherit." It is very remarkable that the Assyrian Venus, according to Lucian, had also offerings of dung placed upon her altars. This custom could only originate in the Galli, her priests, considering her in the light of the great productive principle in nature personified, and connecting with that idea the maxim of the Brahmins, that the apparent destruction of an object is only the re-production of it in another form.

Such, surveyed in its general feature, is the vast, the complicated, system of Indian, or rather Asiatic, superstition. If some parts of the Brahmin ritual appear to have been blended with those adopted by the Jews, the difficulty can only be solved by one or other of the following suppositions; either, that, in the grand primeval theology of the venerable patriarchs, there were certain mysterious rites and hallowed symbols universally prevalent, the use of which has descended to their posterity, settled in the various regions of Asia, and retained among others by the progeny of the faithful Abraham; or else, that the supreme Deity, in condescension to the weakness

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of the Jews, and the predilection which they had unhappily formed in Egypt for the religious habits and ritual of that country, thought proper to indulge his favoured race in the adoption of a few of the most innocent of the Gentile ceremonies. The former of these suppositions is by far the most agreeable to the hypothesis on which this book proceeds, and is by far the most consonant to the jealous honour of the God of Israel. After all, we must own, with Calmet, that the temple of the great Jehovah had many decorations similar to those in the hallowed temples of Asia. He was served there, says the last-cited author, with all the pomp and splendor of an Eastern monarch. He had his table, his perfumes, his throne, his bed-chamber, his officers, his singing-men, and his singing-women.*

* See Calmet's Critical Dissertations on the Hebrew Music, 9. Quarto, 1727.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

From general Description the Author enters on minuter Details relative to the Indian POOJA, *or Sacrifice.—A concise Chapter on the Subject from* SONNERAT. — *Extracts from the Ayeen Akbery. — Commutations of gold and silver Utensils allowed instead of sanguinary Sacrifices of Men and Beasts.—Those Sacrifices, however, still in a degree prevail, which introduces the Subject of the* PENANCES *of the Hindoos. — The excruciating Severities submitted to in the Course of the* CHAR-ASHERUM, *or Four Degrees of Probation, during Initiation into the Indian Mysteries, detailed and compared with those undergone in the Mysteries of Mithra in Persia and at Eleusis.*

THE general view previously exhibited of the rites practised in the Indian temples will prove a proper introduction to the peculiar ceremonies of the smaller distinct Poojas, which are numerous and varied according to the character and attributes of the Deity adored. Sonnerat has given an entire

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but concise chapter, in which the principal of these ceremonies are enumerated and described. As that author is not in the hands of every body and was an eye-witness to the scenes which he relates, I shall present my readers with it entire, as it stands in the Calcutta edition of his voyage, without presuming to make any other alteration in it than the occasional one of a proper name, to render it more consonant to my own orthography, in which, throughout this work, I have endeavoured, as closely as possible, to follow Mr Wilkins.

OF THE DIFFERENT CEREMONIES USED IN THE INDIAN POOJAS.

"Under the name of Pooja," says M. Sonnerat, "all the ceremonies which the different deities daily exact are comprehended. They consist in bathing the god with water and milk, anointing him with butter and odoriferous oils, covering him with rich clothes, and loading him with jewels, which they change every day, as well as the other ornaments, when the pagoda is opulent. They also present him with lamps, where butter is used

used instead of oil: and throw to him flowers of a particular sort, which are consecrated to him separately, one after another; the number they throw is fixed in their sacred books. During the whole time of the ceremony, the dancers move in measured steps before his statue to the sound of instruments. A part of the Brahmins, with chouries of white hair or peacocks feathers, keep off the insects while the rest are employed in presenting him the offerings; for, the Indians never come empty-handed to the temple. They bring, *ad libitum*, rice, camphire, butter, flowers, and fruit When they have none of these, the Brahmins give them flowers, of which they have always baskets ready; and, after they have received payment, they offer them to the god in the name of the worshippers. It belongs to the Brahmins alone to make the Pooja in particular houses, because the divinity must be present, and they alone have the right of making him descend on the earth. On certain festivals of the year, all the Indians are obliged to perform this ceremony, which consists in making offerings and a sacrifice to God. For this purpose, the Brahmin prepares a place which is purified with dried cow-dung, with which the pavement is plastered; and the room

is sprinkled with the urine of the same animal. A vase full of water, covered, is placed in the middle of the room, round which they light lamps filled with butter. When every thing is ready, the Brahmin, sitting on the ground with his head uncovered, recites prayers and from time to time flings flowers and rice upon the vase: when the invocations are finished, the god should be found in the vase. They then make him offerings in which they are interested; for, they present him with that which they desire the year may return to them a hundred fold, such as fruits, rice, and beetel, but no money. The Brahmin afterwards makes the sacrifice, which consists in burning several pieces of wood before the vase, which he only has the right to throw into the fire, one after another, and at those moments which are engaged during the prayer he recites. After this ceremony, the Brahmin takes his leave of the deity with another prayer.

OF DIBARADANE.

The Dibaradané, or offering of fire, is also a daily ceremony in honour of the gods, and makes part of the Pooja. The Brahmin who

officiates

officiates holds in one hand a small bell, which he sounds; and, in the other, a copper lamp full of butter: he makes it pass and repass round the statue of the god he worships. During this time, the Bayaderes dance and sing his praises; after which, the assistants in contemplation, with hands joined, address their vows to the idol. The Brahmin then breaks the garland with which the idol is adorned, distributes the fragments to the people, and receives from them the offerings they have brought to the divinity.

OF THE ABICHEGAM.

The Abichegam makes a part of the Pooja; this ceremony consists in pouring milk on the Lingam. This liquor is afterwards kept with great care, and some drops are given to dying people, that they may merit the delights of the Calaisson. We find traces of the Abichegam in the earliest antiquity. The primitive race of men had a kind of sacrifice, called Libation, which was made in pouring out some liquor, but especially oil, in honour of the divinity. It was also ordained in the written law.

The Indians have preserved this custom, not only in respect to the Lingam, but also in honour of their other deities. They actually offer them libations, wash them with cocoa-nut-oil, melted butter, or water of the Ganges. They always rub them with oil or butter when they address prayers or present offerings to them; so that all their idols are black, smoked, plastered, and soiled with a fetid grease.

OF SANDIVANE.

The Sandivane is a ceremony which the Brahmins alone make daily to the gods in general; and, in the morning, particularly, to Brahma, as the author of their origin. At sun-rise, they go and take water out of a tank, with the hollow of their hand, which they throw sometimes before and sometimes behind them, and over their shoulders, invoking Brahma and pronouncing his praises; by which they are purified and made worthy of his favours. They afterwards throw water to the sun, to testify their thanks and their respect that he has had the goodness to appear and chase away the shades of darkness: they then finish purifying themselves by

bathing.

bathing. This kind of worship was established, in honour of the great Creator of all things, by the first race of mortals, and the Indians have always inviolably adhered to it.*

OF DARPENON.

The Darpenon is instituted in honour of the dead. The Indians, after having purified themselves by bathing, sit down before a Brahmin, who recites prayers: when the Brahmin has finished praying, he pours water, with a small copper vase called chimbou, into one of their hands, which they present to him open and leaning towards him; he then throws, on the same hand, leaves of the plant herbé and grains of gengely, naming the persons for whom he prays. These prayers are made to Dewtahs, who are protectors of the dead.

* The antient priests of Egypt in like manner purified themselves by bathing in the morning and plunging into the sacred waters of the Nile. A worship they might have received from the Indians.

OF NAGAPOOJA.

The term Nagapooja signifies worship of the snake: women are commonly charged with this ceremony. On certain days of the year, when they choose to perform it, they go to the banks of those tanks where the Arichi and Margosier grow: they place under these trees a stone figure, representing a Lingam between two snakes: they bathe themselves, and, after ablution, they wash the Lingam and burn before it some pieces of wood particularly assigned for this sacrifice, throw flowers upon it, and ask of it riches, a numerous posterity, and a long life to their husbands. It is said in the Sastras, that, when the ceremony of Nagapooja is made according to the form prescribed, what is asked is always obtained.* When they have finished their prayers, they leave the stone on the place, never carrying it back to the house: it serves for the same use to all women who find it. If there is neither Arichi or Margosier on the bank of the tank, they carry a branch of each of

* However whimsical this worship may appear, we see it established among all the antients; and the moderns have enlarged upon them.

of these trees, which they plant for the ceremony on each side of the Lingam, and make a canopy over it. The Indians look upon the Arichi as the male and the Margosier as the female, though these trees are of a very different species from each other."*

This account of M. Sonnerat, however accurate, is by no means sufficiently comprehensive. The general Pooja is still more minutely described, with all the accompanying circumstances, in the Ayeen Akbery, and in the following terms, which too forcibly demonstrate how abject a slave to superstition is the Brahmin devotee.

Since the Hindoos admit, observes the minister of Akber, that the Almighty occasionally assumes an elementary form, without defiling his holiness, they make various idols, in gold and other metals, which serve to assist their imaginations while they offer up their prayers to the invisible Deity: this they call Pooja, and divide it into *sixteen* ceremonies. After the devotee has performed his usual and indispensable ablutions with the Sindehya and Howm, he sits down, looking towards the *east* or the *north*, with his legs drawn up in front. Then, taking in his hand a little water and

 rice,

* Sonnerat's Voyages, vol. i. p. 163. Calcutta edit.

rice, he sprinkles the idol, and conceives this act to be a proper preface to the commencement of his adoration. Next follows the *Kulsh Pooja,* in which he worships the idol's flaggon. Then succeeds the *Chankh Pooja,* or the worship of the conch-shell. Last in order is performed the *Ghunta Pooja,* which consists in plastering the bell with ashes of sandal-wood. When he has finished these Poojas, he throws down a little rice and wishes that his God may be manifested. These various duties are all comprised in the first of the sixteen ceremonies. In the second, he prepares and places a table of metal, either gold, silver, or copper, as a seat or throne for the Deity. In the third, he throws water into a vessel to wash his footsteps; for, in Hindostan, it is the custom, that, when a superior enters the house of an inferior, he washes his feet. In the fourth, he sprinkles water thrice, to represent the idol rincing his mouth, since it is also the custom for an inferior to bring to a superior water to rince his mouth with before meals. In the fifth, sandal, flowers, beetel, and rice, are offered to the idol. In the sixth, the idol and his throne are carried to another spot: then, the worshipper takes in his right hand a white conch-shell full of water, which he

he throws over the idol, and with his left hand rings the bell. In the seventh, he wipes the idol dry with a cloth, replaces it upon its throne, and adorns it with vestments of silk or gold stuff. In the eighth, he puts the zennar upon the idol. In the ninth, he makes the tiluk upon the idol in twelve places. In the tenth, he throws over the idol flowers or green leaves. In the eleventh, he fumigates it with perfumes. In the twelfth, he lights a lamp with ghee. In the thirteenth, he places before the idol trays of food, according to his ability, which are distributed amongst the by-standers as the holy relics of the idol's banquet. In the fourteenth, he stretches himself at full length with his face towards the ground, and disposes his body in such a manner as that his eight members touch the ground; namely, the two knees, two hands, forehead, nose, and cheeks, and this they call *shashtang*. These kind of prostration are also performed to great men in Hindostan. In the fifteenth, he makes a circuit around the idol several times. In the sixteenth, he stands in the posture of a slave, with his hands uplifted, and asks permission to depart. — There are particular prayers and many different ways used in performing these sixteen ceremonies.

Some believe, that only from the ninth to the thirteenth are indispensable duties. Except a Saniassi and a Sooder, all other Hindoos are bound to perform this tedious Pooja thrice every day.

Besides these daily offerings of rice, fruits, and ghee, the Hindoos have their grand national sacrifices, not very dissimilar from that of the scape-goat among the Hebrews. The reader will find an account of one of these sacrifices extracted from a Sanscreet book and inserted in the Preface to Mr Halhed's Code. It is called performing the JUGG, literally *the sacrifice*; and though that of the living horse and bull, as well as the more impious oblation of human beings, so extensively detailed towards the commencement of this theological Dissertation, are no longer suffered in Hindostan, yet, have the Brahmins instituted an ingenious substitute, which, without staining the altar with blood, once swelled with exhaustless treasures the coffers of the pagoda. If the expiatory *sacrifice of a man* for some atrocious crime be no longer demanded by the gods, the *weight of a man* in gold and jewels is the only compensation that can be admitted in lieu of the original. If the milk-white steed no longer pours his noble blood on the

altar

altar of the sun, the radiant deity may yet be appeased with a golden horse. If the immolated bull no longer smoke upon the sacred coals of that altar and feed at once the ravenous idol and his glutton priests, a thousand cows, with the points of their horns plated with gold and their hoofs shod with silver, will suffice to avert the dreaded calamity which the living sacrifice was intended to deprecate. This kind of jugg is called DAN, or the giving away of alms to the needy; and of this dan, or pious donation, there are sixteen kinds enumerated in a section of the Ayeen Akbery, a section which cannot be omitted because it is one of the most curious in the whole book. The immense value of these oblations, which history informs us were in antient times actually and frequently bestowed on the Brahmins, demonstrates, as I before had occasion to remark, that Hindostan must, before the invasion of the Mahommedan plunderers, have been far more abundant in bullion and jewels than it has been at any period since that invasion.

THE POOJA, CALLED DAN, OR PIOUS PROPITIATORY DONATIONS.

There are various methods of performing DAN, or pacificatory oblations of bullion and jewels. 1. The devotee weighs himself against gold, silver, and other valuables, and presents the amount to the Brahmins as an oblation to the gods. 2. An image of Brahma is made with four faces, in each of which are two eyes, two ears, two noses, and two mouths; it has four hands, and the parts of the body like an ordinary man. It is of gold and ought to weigh not less than thirty-three tolahs* and four mashahs, nor more than 3410 tolahs. The height must be seventy-two fingers; the breadth forty-eight fingers. This is adorned with jewels; and, after the performance of certain ceremonies, given away in alms. 3. An egg is made of gold, divided in two parts, which join together so as to make a perfect oval. It must not be smaller in breadth and height than twelve fingers nor larger than a hundred

* The tolah, we are informed by Tavernier, a merchant in gold and jewels, is a weight peculiarly appropriated, throughout the Mogul empire, to those precious commodities; and, according to that author, a hundred tolahs amount to thirty-eight ounces.

hundred and ten fingers. The weight must be from sixty-six tolahs six mashahs to three thousand three hundred and thirty-three tolahs four mashahs. 4. This donation consists of a tree which was one of the fourteen things disgorged by the sea in the Courma Avatar. Birds are represented sitting upon the branches. It is made of gold and must not weigh less than two tolahs. 5. This consists of one thousand cows, with the points of their horns plated with gold and their hoofs with silver, with bells and katasses about their necks. 6. This consists of a cow and calf, made of gold, weighing from 850 to 3400 tolahs. 7. The seventh is a horse, made of gold, weighing from 10 tolahs to 3333 tolahs four mashahs. 8. A four-wheeled chariot, made of gold, with four or eight horses, weighing from 10 tolahs to 6660 tolahs eight mashahs. 9. A carriage, drawn by four elephants, all of gold, weighing from 16 tolahs to 6660 tolahs eight mashahs. 10. Four ploughs of gold, of the same weight as the last article. 11. A representation of a piece of land, with mountains and rivers made of gold, not weighing less than 16 tolahs eight mashahs, nor more than 3333 tolahs. 12. A golden sphere, weighing from 66 tolahs

tolahs eight mashahs to 3333 tolahs four mashahs. 13. A golden vine, weighing from 16 tolahs to 3333 tolahs four mashahs. 14. A representation of the seven seas in gold, weighing from 23 tolahs four mashahs to 3333 tolahs four mashahs. 15. A cow and calf made of precious stones. 16. A golden figure, with the head of an elephant and the other parts human, weight from 16 tolahs eight mashahs to 3333 tolahs four mashahs.

According to some Purauns, *toladan* is the only kind that is proper, and none of the others should be less than 106 tolahs six mashahs or more than 833 tolahs four mashahs. There are also different opinions about the manner of distribution; some Brahmins maintaining that it ought to be first given to the ACHAREYA and by them distributed to others. The ACHAREYA are those who teach the Vedas and other sciences. There are distinct ceremonies appointed for each kind of Dan, but it may be bestowed at any time; although, offerings made during eclipses, and when the sun enters the sign of Capricorn, are esteemed more especially meritorious. Great rewards are promised to those who are charitable; insomuch, that, for the first kind of Dan, when a man gives away his own weight in gold,

gold, he is ordained to remain in Paradise for one hundred million kalps, (periods of Brahma.) and, when he re-assumes a human form, he will become a mighty monarch.

I now hasten to fulfil my promise, so often repeated, of detailing the dreadful *prescribed* penances which the Brahmins undergo in their progress through the CHAR ASHERUM, or four Hindoo degrees of probation; and the still more tremendous sufferings *spontaneously* inflicted upon themselves by the Yogees, or devotees of India, to attain a certain and speedy admission into the delights of paradise. This description will, in fact, amount to little less than the history of the human soul, that ethereal spark, as the old philosophers of Asia considered it, which emaned from the bright central source of light and heat; of its various toils and wanderings during its earthly pilgrimage; and its incessant and strenuous efforts to re-unite itself to that source. Nothing can be more interesting or important than this inquiry. I am about to bring forward, on the great theatre of human transaction, agents, who equally brave the dangers of the raging flood and the devouring fire; whose courage is not to be shaken by the sharpest pangs of torture or the ap-

proach

proach of death in its most ghastly and appalling form. On this most curious and affecting subject, let us take, as a basis of our disquisition, that observation of Strabo, which he lays down as the first principle of their theology: *τον μεν ἐνθαδε βιϗ, ὡς ἀν ἀκμην κυομενων εἰναι, τον δε θανατον γενεσιν εἰς τον ὀντως βιον*: or, that this present life is but the life of embryo-existence, a mere conception; but that death is a generation or birth into TRUE LIFE. The reader will now please to compare this true representation of Strabo with all the numerous passages previously extracted by me in the first book of the Indian theology from the Geeta, the Heetopades, and the Sacontala, relative to the incessant migration of the soul, its ascent through the several spheres, and its ardent desires after and final absorption in Brahme, THE SUPREME GOOD. He will likewise pardon me, I trust, for once more bringing to his view the consequent observations upon them, with the circumstances there enumerated of the peculiar and dreadful severities inflicted on himself by the infatuated Yogee, the truth of all which circumstances I shall presently proceed to prove from the most respectable authorities.

"From

" From the collective evidence exhibited in the preceding pages, the assertion with which I commenced these particular strictures on the Metempsychosis, that the professed design of it was to restore the fallen soul to its pristine state of purity and perfection, is proved beyond contradiction. Thus, an interesting and astonishing prospect unfolds itself to our view. Their sacred writings, we see, represent the whole universe as an ample and august theatre for the probationary exertion of millions of beings, who are supposed to be so many spirits, degraded from the high honours of angelic distinction, and condemned to ascend, through various gradations of toil and suffering, until they shall have reached that exalted sphere of perfection and happiness which they enjoyed before their defection. Animated by the desire of obtaining that final boon, and fired by all the glorious promises of the Vedas, the patient Hindoo smiles amidst unutterable misery and exults in every dire variety of voluntary torture. In the hope of expiating former crimes by adequate penance and of regaining speedily that fancied Elysium, he binds himself to the performance of vows which make human nature shudder and human reason stagger. He passes whole weeks

without

without the smallest nourishment and whole years in painful vigils. He wanders about naked as he came from the womb of his parent, and suffers, without repining, every vicissitude of heat and cold, of driving storm and beating rain. He stands with his arms crossed above his head, till the sinews shrink and the flesh withers away. He fixes his eye upon the burning orb of the sun, till its light be extinguished and its moisture entirely dried up. It is impossible to read the following minute description of one of these devotees in the act of stationary penance, as given in the Sacontala, without shuddering. Every circumstance enumerated fills the mind with increasing horror and freezes the astonished reader to a statue, almost as immovable as the suffering penitent. Dushmanta asks; "Where is the holy retreat of Maricha?" — Matali *replies*, "A little beyond that grove, where you see a pious YOGEE, motionless as a pollard, holding his thick bushy hair and *fixing his eyes on the solar orb.* — Mark, his body *is half covered with a white ant's edifice,* made of raised clay; *the skin of a snake* supplies the place of his sacerdotal thread and part of it girds his loins; a number of *knotty plants* encircle and wound his neck,

and *surrounding birds nests* almost cover his shoulders."*

From the whole of the preceding statement it must be evident to every reader that the Brahmins are no strangers to the doctrine, esteemed *absurd* in some Christian countries, but admitted by them from time immemorial, that of ORIGINAL SIN. It is their invariable belief that MAN IS A FALLEN CREATURE. Upon this very belief is built the doctrine of the migration of the soul through various animal bodies, and revolving BOBUNS, or planetary spheres; and I have already endeavoured to prove, that they could only have been united in this uniform belief by some antient, but mutilated, tradition, relative to the defection of man in paradise from primeval innocence and virtue.

The doctrine just alluded to, as so universally prevalent in Asia, that man is a fallen creature, originally gave birth to the persuasion, that, by severe sufferings and a long series of probationary discipline, the soul might be restored to its primitive purity. Hence, oblations the most costly and sacrifices the most sanguinary, in the hope of propitiating the angry powers, for ever loaded the

* Indian Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 283.

the altars of the Pagan deities. They had even sacrifices denominated those of *regeneration*, and those sacrifices were always profusely stained with blood. The Taurobolium of the antients, a ceremony in which the high priest of Cybele was consecrated, was a ceremony of this kind, and might be called a baptism of blood, which they conceived imparted a spiritual new birth to the liberated spirit. In this dreadful and sanguinary ceremony, according to the poet Prudentius, cited at length by Banier on the antient sacrifices, the high priest about to be inaugurated was introduced into a dark excavated apartment, adorned with a long silken robe and a crown of gold. Above this apartment was a floor perforated in a thousand places with holes, like a sieve, through which the blood of a sacred bull, slaughtered for the purpose, descended in a copious torrent upon the enclosed priest, who received the purifying stream on every part of his dress, rejoicing to bathe with the bloody shower his hands, his cheeks, and even to bedew his lips and his tongue, with it. When all the blood had run from the throat of the immolated bull, the carcase of the victim was removed, and the priest issued forth from the cavity a spectacle ghastly and horrible, his

head

head and vestments being covered with blood and clotted drops of it adhering to his venerable beard. As soon as the pontifex appeared before the assembled multitude, the air was rent with congratulatory shouts; so pure and so sanctified however was he now esteemed, that they dared not approach his person, but beheld him at a distance with awe and veneration.*

It has been before observed, that, by these initiations, or baptisms of blood, the antients conceived that they obtained an eternal regeneration, or new birth: nor were they confined to the priests alone; for, persons, not invested with a sacred function, were sometimes initiated by the ceremony of the Taurobolium, and one invariable rule in these initiations was to wear the stained garments as long as possible, in token of their having been thus regenerated. This sacrifice of regeneration was also sometimes performed for the purification of a whole nation, or the monarch that governed it. The animal sacrificed was not obliged to be always of one species; instead of a bull, a ram was frequently sacrificed, when the ceremony was called Criobolium, and sometimes a she goat, when it obtained the

 name

* Prudentius apud Banier's Mythology, vol. i. p. 275.

name of Ægibolium. Some of these regenerations were valid only for twenty years, when they were to be renewed for the acquisition of renovated virtue and the celebration of them often continued for many days. The reader will find in Mountfaucon engravings of several of these Taurobolia and Criobolia, and in particular he will there meet with the design of a very curious one, dug up at Lyons, with an inscription importing, that it was celebrated there for the health of the Emperor Antoninus Pius.*

But to return to that country which is the immediate scene of our investigation, whence this doctrine is with great probability asserted in the most antient periods to have spread over all the kingdoms of Asia: we there find it at this day flourishing with uncommon vigour; all ranks and ages inflicting on themselves severe mortifications in hopes of speedy restitution, and pressing forward to the goal of immortality. From the possibility of this envied restitution to pristine purity and happiness none in India are excluded, but those who have been either so unfortunate or abandoned as to have forfeited their cast; the unhappy and rejected, even though repentant,

race

* See Antiquities Explained, vol. ii. p. 108.

race of Parias or Chandalas, who, by the unalterable laws of Brahma, are doomed to be the everlasting drudges of the other tribes, excluded from even the hope of rising to a higher rank in the creation, or ever amending their forlorn and desperate state. In such abomination are these Chandalahs holden, that, on the Malabar side of India, if they chance even to touch one of a superior tribe, he draws his sabre and cuts him down on the spot, without any check from the laws of the country. Even the shade, which the wretched body of a Chandalah in passing throws upon any object, imparts pollution, pollution not to be wiped away but by a particular process of purification. Destined to misery from their birth, bowed down with incessant toils, which, to any but the patient and unrepining Chandalah, would make life an intolerable burthen; death itself, that last refuge of the unfortunate, opens no dawn of comfort to his mind, and unfolds no scenes of future felicity to reward his past sufferings. The gates of Jaggernaut itself are to him for ever closed; and he is driven, with equal disgrace, from the society of men and the temples of the gods. Human policy or caprice might have given birth to the other singular institutions

of this great empire; but to what principle of human policy can we attribute a law so contrary to the general principles of benevolence, that reigns through the institutions ascribed to Brahma, and fraught with such a diabolical spirit of revenge and malignity?

Like their neighbours, the Indians, the antient Chinese, also, according to Couplet, believed not only in the *immortality*, but in the *transmigration*, of the human soul, occasioned by its primeval defection. They considered the departed spirits of their most virtuous ancestors, who had performed the planetary journey, as engaged in the celestial regions in the benevolent office of intercession with the Supreme Being for their progeny, sojourning, like weary pilgrims, on the bobun of earth; and, therefore, says our author, at their festival-entertainments, before the banquet commenced, they made offerings to them of the choicest viands and poured out libations to their honour; a practice very similar to the ceremony of the Indian STRADHA.* The Chinese theologians, however, while they conclude all men to be involved in vice and error, do not go the dreadful length of anathematizing for ever any of the inferior casts, and barring

* Couplet Scientiæ Sinicæ, lib. ii. p. 103.

barring them out at once from the gates of heavenly mercy and every benefit of earthly compassion. It is doubtless a relic of the abominable Cuthite doctrines, of that relentless race, whose bloody worship outraged all the dictates of humanity, and who, in their infernal orgies, offered up even their sons and their daughters to devils.

Besides the promise of entering at larg into the Brahmin initiations, I have repeatedly pledged myself in the course of this extensive review, or rather history, of the Asiatic theology, to compare the greater Mithratic mysteries, as far as they are known, with those which were celebrated in the cavern-temples of India, and there cannot be a better opportunity for making that comparison than what the present chapter affords, in which we are considering the Brahmin doctrine of the regeneration of the soul, by a severe course of progressive penances rising above each other in horror and anguish. The principal feature of similitude is the unexampled tortures which the respective candidates underwent in their progress through either dreadful ordeal. I shall begin with describing the probationary discipline endured by the Brahmin during his progress through the four degrees of the Char

 Asherum.

Asherum. I shall then proceed to detail the severities submitted to by the Mithriacs, and the reader, who will take the trouble of turning, while he reads these accounts, to the description in the first chapter of the Indian Theology of the Grecian mysteries in honour of Ceres, celebrated at Eleusis, and to that of the Egyptian pomp sacred to Osiris and Isis at Philaë, in the second, will find that he has nearly the whole of the mysteries, performed in the antient world, brought at once before his view in this Dissertation, detailed from the best authorities, and portrayed with no unanimated, but I trust with no exaggerating, pencil.

Abul Fazil, the secretary of Sultan Akber, from the sacred books of the Brahmins, to which he had access, as well as from the oral accounts of those Brahmins, who reposed a confidence in the minister of their most lenient monarch of Mohammedan extract, has inserted, in the third volume of the Ayeen Akbery, a very ample description of the Char Asherum, of which I shall immediately submit the substance to the reader.

The veneration antiently entertained both in India and Persia for the SUN and FIRE, together with many of their consequent superstitions,

perstitions, engaged a considerable portion of the first chapter of the Indian Theology. I did not presume to determine in which of those nations that worship first commenced, but referred it to a Chaldaic origin; to that people who earliest practised the Sabian idolatry. I cited classical authority in proof that horses were, in Persia, sacrificed to the sun, in addition to which, I might have added that direct assertion of Justin, from Trogus Pompeius; *solem unum Deum esse credunt et equos Deo sacratos ferunt.* From Sanscreet books, I also produced evidence of the existence, in antient eras, of an ASWAMMEDHA-JUG, or horse-sacrifice, in India. It is to be feared that both the Mithratic and the Suryatic rites were stained with a more horrid species of sacrifice, the blood of men. This abominable rite, so universally prevalent in the antient world, took its rise from the idea, that, the nobler was the victim offered, the more propitious and benignant was rendered the deity adored. With how dreadful a profusion human blood was antiently shed on the altars of India has already been related; that the caverns of the furious Mithriacs were little better than vast sepulchres of sacrificed men is evident, not only from Porphyry's

second book, De Abstinentia,* in which the dreadful pangs of hunger and thirst, and various other miseries undergone by the emaciated candidate during initiation, are enumerated; but is farther evinced by a very curious fact, related in the Ecclesiastical History of Socrates, a Christian writer who flourished in the fifth century, shortly after the final extinction of the Mithratic superstition at Rome, by order of Gracchus, præfect of the prætorium. In this author's time, the Christians of Alexandria having discovered a cavern that had been consecrated to Mithra, but for a long period closed up, resolved to explore it and examine what remnants of that superstition it contained, when, to their astonishment, the principal thing they found in it was a great quantity of human skulls, with other bones of men that had been sacrificed, which were brought out, publicly exposed, and excited the utmost horror in the inhabitants of that great city.†

This general though dreadful feature of resemblance between the Mithratic and Suryatic devotees having been thus again brought before the view of the reader, I proceed, in the

* De Abstinentia. lib. ii. p. 71, et seq.

† Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. ii. cap. 2.

the first place, from that authentic register, the Ayeen Akbery, to present him with the account of

THE BRAHMIN CHAR-ASHERUM, OR FOUR DEGREES OF PROBATION.

THE FIRST DEGREE, OF BRAHM-CHAREE.—This state may be entered into by the young Brahmin noviciate, so early as the eighth year, when the first ceremony of initiation is the putting on of the sacred zennar, or cord of three threads, in memory and honour of the three great deities of Hindostan. Those who refuse to admit the hypothesis, so amply detailed in the former chapter, relative to what I suppose to be the genuine origin of those three deities, must continue to consider them as the three elements personified; earth, fire, and air; which latter element condensed, according to the Brahmins, is water. These, say the antagonists of that hypothesis, are the principles of which all bodies in nature, and man himself, are composed. These were, therefore, considered as *first principles*, and in that sense deified by a race plunged in materialism. I have thus ingenuously stated the opposite argument,

argument, that the reader, who is not inclined to degrade the human soul into a portion of respired air, may judge which of the two is the nobler hypothesis.

The materials of which the zennar is composed, and the mystic ceremonies with which it is formed, have been already described. This cord must be twisted and put on the young Brahmin by his father or tutor; and, when put on for the first time, it is accompanied with a piece of the skin of an antelope, three fingers in breadth, but shorter than the zennar; the meaning of which I cannot conjecture, except it be allusive to the life which the holy hermit leads in those woody solitudes, where beasts of the chase are his companions and their skins his only covering from the inclemency of the weather. This doctrine of sylvan seclusion is farther inculcated by their also investing the Brahm-charee or Brahmassari, as the word is sometimes better written, by a circular belt, formed of a sacred grass called *moonj*.*

He now learns the *Gayteree*, or hymn in honour of the sun, and he is presented with a staff of sacred palass-wood. He then leaves the house of his natural for the abode of his spiritual

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 215.

spiritual father, under whose tuition he learns all the sublime doctrines and mysterious rites inculcated in the Vedas. There is no occasion for me to recapitulate all the routine of his various ablutions. The precise enumeration of these would be in many instances indelicate, since it is with the Brahmins as with the Mahomedans, every call of animal nature is attended with reiterated lavation. Let us attend to his *dress:* for, the reader will ever bear in remembrance the difference subsisting between a Brahmin, who is the old Brachman, and wears apparel, and the Yogee, or old gymnosophist, who, warm with fervid piety, spurns external clothing. A gymnosophist, or Hindoo penitent, is not properly a Brahmin, though a Brahmin, by adopting severer austerities, may become a gymnosophist.

His dress consists of, first, a *lungowtee*, or cloth of decency, which covers the waste; secondly, a *lungee*, another cloth which folds over the former; thirdly, a linen robe without any suture, a kind of vestment, which, it is remarkable, the great high priest himself condescended to wear; fourthly, a linen cap. He bathes every morning without any covering but the lungowtee and the grass cord of moonj. His morning ablution and the attendant ceremonies,

monies, extracted from this part of the Ayeen Akbery, are inserted in my second chapter with some observations, which need not be repeated here, although the account of the bathing itself must by no means be omitted. "The Brahmin bathes every morning before sun-rise. He begins his ablution with taking up in his right hand a little water, and says, Pardon my offences! After this, he throws away the water; then, he rubs himself all over with earth; and, if he be in a river, dives three times, or else he throws water thrice over his body and rubs himself with his hands. Next, he repeats the name of GOD, and, afterwards, thrice takes up in his right hand a little water, which he sips, and repeats certain prayers, during all which time he sprinkles water upon his head. Then, with his fore-finger and thumb, he stops his nostrils, and, bowing down his face to the surface of the water, repeats another prayer, and then plunges again or throws water over himself thrice. He then sprinkles seven times his forehead, breast, and shoulders; after this, joining his open hands, he fills them eight times with water and throws it towards the sun, reciting a particular prayer. He, then, sips the water, and finally repeats the PA-

RAYENAM." After this ablution, he puts on the different garments above described, and, accordingly as he may chance to be a Brahmin of the Veeshnu or Seeva cast, makes the different marks on his forehead and body with ashes, turmeric, or vermilion; but, if he have bathed in the Ganges, nothing can be more in repute for this ceremony than the clay of that holy water, which washes away all human offences. He now takes up his pilgrim-staff and throws over his shoulders a leathern belt, with a pouch fastened to it, for the purpose of containing such food as benevolence may supply him with. He then performs the *sindeyha* and *howm*. The former is a prayer, attended with a repetition of drinking and sprinkling of water after a particular manner. The latter is a burnt-sacrifice, and can only be properly performed in a fire which has been kindled by the friction of two pieces of palass or peepul wood, which are accounted sacred. The ceremony consists in passing through the fire, or throwing into it, a piece of the same consecrated wood with which it was kindled, and the flame of which is never suffered to be wholly extinguished.

When the charity of the pious has supplied rice or fruits for his scanty meal, he first

first offers it to his tutor, who tastes it, and, having craved his permission to eat, with many prayers and ablutions he gets through his vegetable banquet. The luxury of honey, beetel, and perfumes, is denied to the Hindoo aspirant, who never goes where there are singing, dancing, or gaming. As he grows up, the hair of his head is shaven, all but one solitary lock at the back of the crown. He is permitted to have no commerce with women; but the most rigid purity in thought and action is enjoined him. All the ebullitions of anger, envy, and revenge, are checked by the severest discipline; and the love of truth and virtue inculcated by promises of the most flattering distinction and attainments in another and more perfect state of being. In prayer, ablution, and studying the Vedas, the day is consumed; and, when the sun begins to decline, ceremonies, nearly similar to those which preceded its appearing above the horizon, are again repeated: the gayteree, the sindeyha, the howm. At length, he retires to short repose on his wretched bed of straw, or sleeps under the first tree that offers, wrapt up in the skin of a stag, antelope, or some other animal.* Some continue in this initiatory state

only

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 219.

only five years; the more general practice is to remain in it twelve years; but others, from diffidence and other motives, spend all their lives in this preparatory ordeal.

THE SECOND DEGREE, or GERISHTH.—When the Bramassari has finished the course of study, devotion, and austerity, prescribed him, if he feel an inclination to continue his spiritual progress, to despise all terrestial enjoyments, and devote the rest of his life to the service of the stern deity whom he adores, it is in the highest degree meritorious; but if he feel no such inclination, or shrink from the severity of future suffering, he is not compelled to advance farther in the dreadful trial. In that case, he waits upon his Brahmin-preceptor, and obtains permission to return to the house of his father. In the state of GERISHTH, the dress is entirely changed, except in the article of the zennar, which is retained through life. The initiated now puts on a turban of linen rolled round in many folds; a sheet eight cubits long and two broad serves to cover his loins and thighs; another sheet four cubits long and two broad is thrown over his shoulders: this latter may have a suture, the former must have none.

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The Gerishth rises four ghurrics before day-break, and goes through all the ceremonies which were observed by him in his former state, but his ablutions are doubled, and his prayers, sprinklings, and sacrifices, proportionably increased. His day is divided into eight different parts, to each of which a particular duty is assigned, the enumeration of all which would be tedious to a European reader. He offers solemn oblations to the deutahs and his departed ancestors, whom he hopes speedily to rejoin: he supports life by gleaning the fields after the reapers, or by begging here and there a handful of rice, and a part even of this scanty supply he throws into the fire as an offering to the deutah and the dead. In the evening, the multiplied ceremonies of ablution, the sindehya, and the howm, return; and afterwards he retires to pass the greater part of the night in vigils, observing the silent course of the moon and planets, and contemplating with rapture the blue vault in which the fixed stars are placed; those glittering orbs, among which his impatient spirit burns to mount. In this sense alone can we understand what we are told by Abul Fazil, in regard to the Brahmins of this degree passing the evening in the study of philosophy:

philosophy: it was an astronomical philosophy deeply connected with their Sabian theology; and, though the secretary of Akber was not deeply acquainted with their system of astronomy, yet, from that extent in which it is now known to the moderns, we are certain that a very large portion of the night must antiently have been devoted to this study. The aweful season of incumbent darkness was that in which antiently the deeper mysteries of the Brahmin religion commenced, and nocturnal hymns resounded through the long ailes of Elephanta and echoed amidst the spacious dome of Salsette. Through the northern gates of those caverns, or cavities, pierced in the roof for the purpose, they watched the motions of the planets and marked the gradual apparent revolution of the heavens; on particular aspects and conjunctions, rending the midnight air with shouts of joy or outcries of terror.

Were not they accustomed thus nightly in their cells to observe the celestial phænomena, how could their various fasts and festivals, which are, for the most part, regulated by the position of the heavenly bodies, and particularly by the entrance of the moon into the respective *nac shattras*, or lunar mansions, have

been instituted with such astronomical precision? What is the RAAS JATTRA but the circular dance of the planets round the sun? What are the eternal contests of the Soors and Assoors, or bright and sable genii, represented in the festival dramas of India, especially at the great equinoctial feast of Durga, but emblematical representations of the imagined contests of the summer and winter signs for the dominion of the varied year, and the different aspects of the planets? What is meant by the great celestial dragon, that on every eclipse seises with his teeth the affrighted sun and moon, but the ascending and the descending nodes? What is the serpent with a thousand heads on which Veeshnu sleeps at the solstitial period, but the hydra of the skies, that vast constellation, the numerous stars inclosed in which are poetically called its flaming heads, vomiting fire, and on which the Greeks founded the story of the Lernæan hydra, slain by Hercules, (that is, the constellation Hercules,) the foot of which latter asterism, on the celestial sphere, is placed near the head of the former. These dramatic exhibitions at the various festivals of India, nearly all founded upon astronomical observation, instituted in the earliest periods of the

Indian

Indian empire, allusive to physical phænomena, and the meaning of which is not at this day fully comprehended by the Indian audience themselves, I can consider in no other light than as relics of the sacred mysteries antiently exhibited in the holy grove and the gloomy cavern, where, as in the Mithratic mysteries, the constellations were represented by forms similar to those under which they were designated in the heavens; where, while Seeva rode on the bull, Veeshnu flew on the eagle of the sphere, and became successively incarnate in the fishes, the boar, (an asterism in the Chinese zodiac,) the testudo, and the lion. At this late period, and with the few genuine documents of remote Indian antiquity in our possession, we can only be guided by analogy in forming our judgement relative to the antient mysteries practised in the religious exhibitions of the Brachmanian magi; and that judgement may, in a great degree, be regulated by the glimmering information which has descended to us, relative to the doctrines and practises of their Persian brethren, the disciples of Zoroaster, in the neighbouring mountains of Media, during periods in which we have few authenticated accounts of those flourishing in Hindostan.

The initiation, therefore, into these profounder mysteries, I consider as peculiar to the second Asherum, in which both the constitution and the mind of the aspirant were endued with matured and manly vigour, to bear, with less injury, the trying severities which distinguished it, the first Asherum being a state of comparative infancy. The third Asherum, on the description of which we must now enter, is the state of imbecil age. The accumulation of horrors which mark this state, I shall insert almost *verbatim* from Abul Fazil.

THE THIRD DEGREE, or BANPERISTH.—When a Brahmin, determined to be a Banperisth, arrives at advanced age, or becomes a grandfather, he gives up the management of his family to his son, or some other relation, and he then bids adieu to the world. He quits the populous city for eternal solitude, and, retiring to the desert, he there builds himself a cell or grotto, where he gradually weans his heart from all worldly concerns and makes preparation for his last journey. If his wife, through affection, wishes to accompany him to this woody solitude, it is allowable; but the secluded pair must subdue

all

all carnal inclinations and become cold as the rock on which they repose.

Here the hoary devotee cherishes the perpetual fire for sacrifice and wraps his aged limbs in a vestment made of the *leaves or bark of trees*, a coarse lungowtee being the only piece of linen that he may wear. He never cuts his hair nor pairs his nails. At morning, noon, and evening, he performs his ablutions with the sindchya; and every morning and evening the howm takes place, in the same manner as is directed for the gerishth; but his ablutions are now trebled, and he lives, as it were, in the purifying wave. Yet, solitary and forlorn, he hangs down his head, bending under the weight of imaginary crimes. In silence not to be broken, and with reverential awe, he perpetually reads and meditates on the holy Vedas. He never suffers sleep to oppress his eye-lids in the day-time, and, in the night, he takes his scanty repose upon the bare ground. In the summer months, he sits in the ardent beam of a tropical sun, surrounded with four fires. During the four rainy months, he dwells upon a stage raised above the water by four poles, but entirely exposed to the inclemency of the weather. In the four winter months, *he sits all night in cold*

water. He incessantly performs the fast of Chanderayan and eats only when night approaches.

To sustain life in his voluntary exile, he is allowed to amass a store of provisions sufficient for one year; but he is absolutely forbidden to taste any food artificially prepared by man, and he exists solely upon dried fruits and grain that grows wild in the deserts. That grain is not to be cooked even by himself, he is only allowed to soften it with water. When he cannot collect provisions himself, he applies to other Banperisths; or, if they cannot supply him, he then, through absolute necessity, goes to the next town for such food as charity may supply him with, but he remains there no longer than is necessary for the purpose of obtaining that food.

If worn down by a long course of unrelenting severities, the animal spirits sink and he becomes weary of life: he, then, by the permission of the Vedas, travels either to the east, whence the bright symbol of the deity darts its first ray upon the earth, or directs his progress towards the north, doubtless for an astronomical reason, since, in describing the two gates of heaven, through

which

which the migrating soul glides, Homer informs us,,

> That on the *north* is pervious to mankind,
> The sacred *south* to immortals is consign'd,

pursuing his solitary journey to the land unknown. Disdaining all obstruction, rejecting all nourishment, and absorbed in intense contemplation on the state to which he is rapidly advancing, he presses forward in his fancied career to happiness and glory, till exhausted nature faints under the task: he staggers, falls, and expires! If a less tedious and toilsome death should prove more agreeable to him, he is not restrained to this mode of departure, but he may plunge at once into consuming fire, he may bury himself in the overwhelming flood, or he may precipitate himself from a rocky eminence, that he may be dashed to pieces in the fall. These suicidal executions they consider as the sure road to paradise; but, unless the penitent has reached the fourth degree and suffered the tortures of the state of Saniassi, he has no title, from this action alone, to the sublime rewards of Mokt.* The fast of Chanderayan, mentioned above, is thus practised. — The devotee

 cats

* Heaven. See Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 223.

eats on the first day only one mouthful, two mouthfuls during the second day, and he thus continues increasing a mouthful every day for a month. He then decreases gradually a mouthful on each day, till he is at length reduced to the single mouthful with which he began. Such is the Chanderayan, and it must be owned to be a very ingenious mode of inflicting progressive and lingering torture; but the ingenuity of the Hindoos in this respect still more wonderfully displays itself in many of those enumerated in the following section, which forms a proper appendix to the tremendous excruciations of the third Asherum.

Different Kinds of Hindoo Fasts.

The first kind is when the penitent neither eats nor drinks for a day and night. There are twenty-nine such fasts in the course of the year, which are indispensable.

The second kind. He fasts during the day and eats at night.

The third kind. He eats nothing but fruits and drinks milk or water.

The fourth kind. He eats once during the day and night.

The

The fifth kind. He eats only one particular kind of food during the day and night, but as often as he pleases.

The sixth kind. Chandcrayan, which has been described.

The seventh kind. He neither eats nor drinks for twelve days.

The eighth kind. This lasts twelve days. During the first three days, he eats a little once in a day. During the next three days, he eats only once in the night. During the three days next succeeding, he never tastes any thing, unless it be brought to him by the hand of accidental benevolence. During the last three days, he neither eats nor drinks.

The ninth kind. This fast lasts fifteen days, and is observed in the following manner:—For three days and nights, the penitent eats only one handful at night. For the next three days and nights, if accidental charity should bestow upon him such a handful, he eats it, otherwise he does not take any sustenance. For the three succeeding days and nights, he eats nothing. During the three days and nights following, he takes only a handful of warm water each day. The last three days and nights of this dreadful pe-

nance,

nance, a handful of warm milk each day is his only allowance.

The tenth kind. For three days and nights, he neither eats nor drinks. He lights a fire, and sits contemplative at a door, where there enters a hot suffocating wind, which he draws in with his breath.

The eleventh kind. This also lasts fifteen days, and is performed after the following manner: — Three days and nights he eats nothing but leaves; three days and nights, nothing but the seed of the lotos; three days and nights, nothing but peepul-leaves; three days and nights, the expressed juice of a particular kind of grass called DOOBAH.

The twelfth kind. The following is his regimen for a week. The first day he lives entirely upon milk; the second, upon milk-curds; the third, he tastes nothing but ghee; the fourth, his disgusting beverage is the urine of the cow; the fifth, the excrements of that holy animal are his allotted food; the sixth, water is his only nourishment; on the seventh, the stern mandate of a severe superstition ordains to be a total fast.

During every kind of fast, he abstains from flesh, adess, lubya, honey, and molasses, sleeps on the ground, plays not at any game, has

no connection with woman, anoints not himself with oil, neither shaves himself: but every day, while it lasts, he bestows charity and performs other good actions.

The FOURTH ASHERUM being the state of Saniassi, and the Saniassi differing but little in point of unexampled severity from the gymnosophist of the antients, or modern YOGEE, a character on the investigation of which I must enter at considerable length, and with which it is my intention to conclude the Indian Theology, I shall, in this place, insert the relation of the kindred tortures endured by the initiated in the MYSTERIES OF MITHRA; stupendous and nefarious mysteries, equally dishonourable to the deity and destructive to man!

THE DREADFUL RITES OF INITIATION INTO THE MITHRIAC MYSTERIES UNVEILED.

The account, given in a preceding page of the discovery of the Mithriac sepulchral cavern of Alexandria, is decisive in regard to the human sacrifices of the Mithriacs, but exhibits no satisfactory evidence relative to the peculiar mode of ornamenting and lighting

up the subterraneous temple, described by me in a former chapter, and the refulgent orbs of different metals, (whence came the astronomical characters of chemistry in use among us,) by which the several planets were designated. I have it, however, now in my power to establish beyond a doubt that curious circumstance recorded by Celsus.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century, in digging between the hills Viminalis and Quirinalis, at Rome, and in a spot which formed the vineyard of Horatius Muti, some workmen discovered a vaulted chamber, or small circular temple, and the reader has been already informed, that all the temples of Mithra and Vesta, that is, the sun and fire, were both vaulted and circular, being symbolical of the world, fabricated by Mithra and illumined by his beam, and nourished and invigorated by the central fire of Vesta. In the middle of this temple stood a statue of Mithra, of white marble, somewhat less than four feet high. It stood erect upon a globe, out of which a serpent issued, the emblem of life, which, twining in numerous folds around the body of the deity, marked the revolutions of his orb and the cycles of revolving time. The body of the statue was that of a man,

the

the head was that of a lion, alluding to the LEO MITHRIACA, or lion of the zodiac, which the reader may see engraved on Dr Hyde's first plate and in the preceding volume. And here it may be useful to observe, that whensoever, in antique sculptures or paintings, we meet with figures having the heads of lions, bulls, dogs, serpents, or horses, they in general allude either to those in the zodiac, or one or other of the forty-eight old constellations, according to the astronomical mythology of the country. The Sphynx of Egypt, so often noticed as the symbol of the sun in Leo and Virgo, and the Anubis of that country, exposed to view when Sirius rose heliacally, will fully explain my meaning. The two hands of this image grasp two keys, pressed closely to his breast, and four large wings expand from his shoulders. The two keys plainly denote his power over the two hemispheres, when, as the poets have it, he unlocks *the gates of light* to either world, and his four wings evidently point to the four quarters of that universe which he commands, as well as the velocity with which the solar light travels to them. The circumstance, however, which principally arrested the attention of those who discovered this cavern-temple, was, that, around this image,

A CIRCLE OF LAMPS was suspended in regular order, which seemed to be made of baked earth, and which there can be but little doubt were formerly coloured to give the varied light of the planets symbolised, although those colours were no longer discernible. What was exceedingly remarkable, these lamps were so arranged as that the side which gave the light was turned towards the statue, a proof that the antients knew the planets were themselves opaque bodies, and derived their light from the central orb, around which they revolved.*

Such was the Persian Mithra: — let us examine the character and offices of the priests who officiated in those caverns, which, Luctantius has before partly informed us, were chosen to be his temples; for this reason, that, amidst the darkness of those recesses, the astronomical priests might more effectually display to the view of their disciples the manner after which eclipses of the sun, and other heavenly bodies, took place. On this head we must again consult Porphyry, who well knew, and as ably as possible defended against the repeated

* See the account of Flaminius Vacca, a Roman sculptor, who examined this temple, extracted, from an Italian journal, by Mountfaucon in his Antiquities, vol. i. p. 232.

peated attacks of the fathers, the whole circle of Pagan superstitions. Porphyry informs us, that, from the lion being so usual a symbol in these rites, the priests were sometimes called *Leones*, and the priestesses *Leænæ*; for, Mithra had female ministers attending on his orgies. Hence too the rites themselves were often denominated *Leontica*. From a crow or raven being, in most Oriental regions, a bird sacred to the sun, and of great request in these mysteries, they were thence called Coraces and Hierocoraces, and the mysteries themselves Coracica and Hierocoracica.* The raven is one of the oldest constellations, and perpetually occurs on all the marbles on which the Mithratic emblems are engraved, as may be seen in the plates of Hyde and Mountfaucon, illustrative of the rites of Mithra. In fine, these rites were sometimes called emphatically Eliaca, from El and Elios, terms which signify the sun. All these priests wore the figures of the animal-constellations which they represented and whose names they bore; but, as we have learned from Celsus, that, in the cave of Mithra, were exhibited the two-fold motions of the celestial orbs, that is, the apparent one of the fixed stars and the real one of the planetary;

* Porphyry de Abstinentia, lib. iv. p. 165.

planetary; and, as there were *patres sacrorum et matres sacrorum*, so it is reasonable to suppose that there were numerous priests of different orders, ages, and stations, according to the different magnitudes of the constellations which they represented, some being placed in the zodiac, some in the northern, some in the southern, hemisphere; but, as to Mithra himself, I have Porphyry's express authority for asserting that his elevated station in his own temple was in the middle of the equinoctial, possibly engraved on high, in a broad line of gold, which cut the zodiac as in the real sphere.*

The general figure of the cavern, and the position of the two gates; the gate of the fiery Cancer, the summer solstice, through which the migrating soul descended on the *north*, and that of the watery Capricorn, the winter solstice, through which it ascended on the *south*; the geometrical symbols with which it was adorned, the fountains of water that ran murmuring through the midst of it, the fires kept continually burning in its inmost recesses; the two last, emblematical of the fluid and igneous elements; and the erected ladder of seven planetary gates; have all been noticed

* De Antro Nymph. p. 265, idem edit.

noticed in various preceding pages.* Among the decorations of the cave, alluded to and described by Porphyry, were marble urns for the water of ablution, and with such small cisterns, or tanks, as they call them, every sacred cavern in India at this day abounds. The Mithratic cave also contained numerous vases full of honey for oblation. Now, honey, I have observed, still makes a principal part of the libations offered on the altars of the Indian deities. Porphyry descants highly on the virtues of honey as a great cleanser and purifier of the blood, and, therefore, so far as man was concerned, properly used in initiation as an emblem of that purer state about to be commenced by the candidate. Speaking of it as an offering to the deity, he calls it the aliment, the nectar, of the gods. It is indeed the essence of odorous flowers, and it appears no more than just and grateful, that a production, in part elaborated by the solar beam, should be offered up on the altar of the god, whose vivifying energy matured it in the fragrant bosom of the parent-plant.

All antient writers unite in asserting that the Mithriac mysteries were of an aweful and terrifying nature. They seem to have thought

* See Indian Theology, chap. i. p. 316, et seq.

them too horrible even to be revealed, and have therefore left us totally in the dark as to the greater part of the punishments endured during initiation. These punishments some of them affirm to be of eighty different kinds;* others reduce them to twenty-four in number.† From the severity of those which are known to posterity, we may form some judgement of the others, the history of which is lost in the abyss of near two thousand years.

A drawn sword, if Tertullian may be credited, opposed the candidate at his very entrance into the cavern, from which, in the virtuous obstinacy of perseverance, he received more than one wound. The inflexibility and firmness of his character being thus tried, and steel itself in vain opposed to him, he was admitted through the north gate, or that of Cancer, where a fire, fiercely glowing with the solstitial blaze, scared, but could not terrify or retard, the determined aspirant. He was compelled to pass through this flame repeatedly, and was thence hurried to the southern gate, or that of Capricorn, where the solstitial floods awaited him. Into these floods

* Porphyry de Abstinentia, p. 150.

† Nonni Dionysiaca, p. 97.

floods his exhausted frame was instantly plunged, and he was obliged to swim in them, and combat with the waves, till life was at the last gasp. The dreadful rite of purification was not yet over: he was now doomed to undergo a rigid fast, which, according to Nicætus, quoted by the Abbe Banier, lasted fifty days; but this we must presume to be exaggerated, since no human creature can exist fifty hours without taking sustenance. We can only reconcile it to reason, by supposing the time much shorter, or an allowance of some scanty food, barely sufficient to support agonising nature. During this rigid fast he was exposed to the horrors of a dreary desert, remote from human assistance and shut out from human compassion. After this, according to the same author, the candidates were cruelly beaten with rods for two whole days; and, during the last twenty days of their trial, were buried up to their neck in snow.

If nature sunk not, as she frequently did, under all this dreadful accumulation of sufferings, the honours of initiation were conferred upon the candidate; and, first, a golden serpent was placed in his bosom, as an emblem of his being regenerated and made a disciple of Mithra. For this animal, renewing its

vigour in the spring of every year, by casting its skin, was not only considered as an apt symbol of renovated and reviresccnt virtue, but of the sun himself, whose genial heat is annually renewed when he re-visits the vernal signs; at that period, when, as I have elsewhere expressed myself of Mithra opening the year in Taurus,

Bursting the gloom of winter's drear domain,
The radiant youth resumes his vernal reign;
With sinewy arms reluctant Taurus tames,
Beams with new grace, and darts severer flames.

The candidate was next adorned with a mystic zone, or belt, which was the circle of the zodiac, and had the zodiacal figures engraved upon it. Upon his head was placed the Persian tiara, or high Phrygian bonnet, terminating pyramidically, as we see it on all the statues of Mithra. This cap was symbolical of the beam of the sun, and it was worn by the priests of Egypt, as well as by those of Persia; it is conspicuous on the heads of the antique figures, engraved on the large plate of the temple of Luxore, in my former volume.

The high priest of Mithra wore a linen tiara, or mitre, of great magnitude, and rolled round several times, in imitation of the convolutions

volutions of the orbs. Possibly the name of *mitre* might be primarily derived from this high conical cap worn in the rites of Mithra, which was also covered with rays and painted with various devices. It is to these caps that the prophet Ezekiel, cited in the first chapter, alludes when he ridicules the ornaments that decorated the gods of the Sabian idolaters, which he calls, *the images of the Chaldeans portrayed upon the walls with vermilion,* GIRDED *with* GIRDLES *upon their loins, and exceeding in* DYED ATTIRE *upon their heads.** The Brahmins and their deities, to this day, wear the mystic belt, or girdle; and it has been before observed, from antient travellers, that they formerly wore a cap or turban, of white muslin, folded round the head in such a manner, as that the extremities of the folds exhibited to the spectator the appearance of the two horns of a cow, that is, of the moon in her increase.† This fashion of folding the sash that girds the head is not now, I believe, in use, at least in general use, in India, and perhaps never flourished but among the higher orders of the priests. Its existence there, however, in antient periods, still farther proves the

* Ezekiel, xxiii. 15.

† See Voyage de l'Arabie Heureuse, p. 135.

the similarity of the astronomical mythology of these two nations.

The noviciate was now invested with the *candys*, or large loose tunic, which, on every antient picture of Mithra, is represented floating widely in the air from the shoulders of the god, while his rapid wings waft him impetuously through the expanse of heaven. This tunic or mantle was the most beautiful and splendid pageant in the world; having a purple ground, and being studded all over with innumerable stars, the constellations of both hemispheres, like the robe worn by *Isis Omnia*, and engraved in the first volume of the Indian History, after the description of that goddess, as beheld in the pomp of her paraphernalia, by Apuleius, who had himself been initiated in the mysteries of Eleusis. He had likewise the pastoral staff, or crosier, similar to that of the Brahmins, put into his hand, being allusive to the immediate influence of the sun in the affairs of agriculture.*

Thus invested and decorated with all the symbols of the power and operations of his god, he was prepared for those greater and more tremendous mysteries, of which no authentic

* See Apuleius, vol. i. p. 13.

thentic relations have reached posterity, but in which both bulls and men are supposed to have been sacrificed, and in which real lions, whence the mysteries were called *leontica*, and other animals, whose figures covered the walls of the temple, are thought to have been introduced. The ill-omened raven screamed aloud its funeral note; the dreadful barkings of the dog Sirius reverberated through the cavern, *visæque canes ululare per umbras*; the hissings of envenomed serpents, that is, the Draco and Serpentarius of the sphere, filled with terror the trembling audience; for there, if ever, in that sidereal Metempsychosis, or passage of the soul among the stars to its final abode, the MOKT of the Brahmins, *angues Triptolemi stridebant*; and there, if ever, were heard those dreadful thunderings and lightnings the conflict of elements and warring clouds, which Mithra at his will could congregate or dissipate, and which the poet Claudian professedly alludes to as forming a part of the Eleusinian mysteries; mysteries of which Warburton ought to have known, that those of Mithra were the prototype, because the Persians were a more antient nation than the Greeks.

Jam mihi cernuntur trepidis delubra moveri
Sedibus, et claram dispergere fulmina lucem;
Adventum testata Dei! Jam magnus ab imis
Auditur fremitis terris, templumque remugit.*

How much more applicable this description is to the stupendous exhibitions in the Mithratic temple than those of Eleusis must be evident to the reader, who reflects how much sublimer a character in antiquity was Mithra than Ceres; how much superior the deity, who rules the heavens, in which thunder is generated and lightning kindled, to the deity which presides over the earth and its productions. In fact, in the rites of the former, the thunders alluded to were the aweful tropical thunders, and bore immediate reference to a particular stage of the mystic exhibition; in those of the latter, they were principally used to swell the pomp of the ceremony and elevate the grandeur of the goddess.

How close an imitation the Eleusinian mysteries were of the more antient rites of Persia will, I am of opinion, appear from what has been inserted in a preceding page, relative to the officiating characters who presided in the former, and who were of an astronomical cast. Indeed, the general feature of

* Claudian, p. 54.

of similarity between them is so great, and both have so manifest a relation to those of India, that I hope the reader will pardon me if I wind up this account of the Persian mysteries with selecting a few striking passages from a preceding volume on the subject, in which that similarity is most particularly apparent. It must be owned, indeed, that the Greek philosophers improved upon those instituted by their predecessors by the profound morality which they inculcated in their mysteries; morality, which, after all, is far preferable and far more beneficial to man than the boldest flights of imagination in the institution of a wild system of a fabulous sidereal Metempsychosis.

Nothing can be conceived more solemn than the rites of initiation into the greater mysteries of Eleusis, as described by Apuleius and Dion Chrysostome, who had both gone through the awful ceremony: nothing more tremendous and appalling than the scenery exhibited before the eyes of the terrified *aspirant*. After entering the grand vestibule of the mystic shrine, he was led by the hierophant, amidst surrounding darkness and incumbent horrors, through all those extended ailes, winding avenues, and gloomy adyta, already mentioned

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as equally belonging to the mystic temples of Egypt, Eleusis, and India. I have asserted before that the Metempsychosis was one of the leading *principia* taught in those temples, and this first stage was intended to represent the toilsome wanderings of the benighted soul through the mazes of vice and error before initiation: or, in the words of an antient writer, quoted by Warburton from Stobæus: "It was a rude and fearful march through night and darkness."* Presently the ground began to rock beneath his feet, the whole temple trembled, and strange and dreadful voices were heard through the midnight silence. To these succeeded other louder and more terrific noises, resembling thunder; while quick and vivid flashes of lightning darted through the cavern, displaying to his view many ghastly sights and hideous spectres, emblematical of the various vices, diseases, infirmities, and calamities, incident to that state of terrestrial bondage from which his struggling soul was now going to emerge, as well as of the horrors and penal torments of the guilty in a future state. At this period, all the pageants of vulgar idolatry, all the train of gods, supernal and infernal, passed in aweful

succession

* See Divine Legation, vol. i. p. 235.

succession before him, and a hymn, called *the Theology of Idols*, recounting the genealogy and functions of each, was sung: afterwards, the whole fabulous detail was solemnly recanted by the mystagogue; a divine hymn in honour of ETERNAL AND IMMUTABLE TRUTH was chanted, and the profounder mysteries commenced. "And, now, arrived on the verge of *death* and *initiation*, every thing wears a dreadful aspect; it is all horror, trembling, and astonishment." An icy chilliness seises his limbs; a copious dew, like the damp of real death, bathes his temples; he staggers, and his faculties begin to fail; when the scene is of a sudden changed, and the doors of the interior and splendidly-illumined temple are thrown wide open. "A miraculous and divine light discloses itself: and shining plains and flowery meadows open on all hands before him." *Accessi confinium mortis*, says Apuleius,* *et calcato Proserpinæ limine, per omnia vectus elementa remeavi; nocte medio vidi* SOLEM *candido coruscantem lumine:*—Arrived at the bourn of mortality, after having trodden the gloomy threshold of Proserpine, I passed rapidly through all the surrounding elements; and, at

* Apuleii Metamorphosis, lib. ii. v. i. p. 273. Edit. Bipont. 1788.

at deep midnight, beheld the sun shining in meridian splendour. The clouds of mental error and the shades of real darkness being now alike dissipated, both the soul and body of the initiated experienced a delightful vicissitude; and, while the latter, purified with lustrations, bounded in a blaze of glory, the former dissolved in a tide of overwhelming transport. Those few authors of the antient world, who have written on this subject, and who have dared to unfold to posterity the aweful and deep secrets into which they were initiated, speak of them exactly as the Brahmins do of the divine raptures of *absorption* in the Deity, or the modern sect of Swedenborgh of those of their imagined Elysium. At that period of virtuous and triumphant exultation, according to the divine Plato, (the VYASA of Greece,) "they saw celestial beauty in all the dazzling radiance of its perfection, when, joining with the glorified chorus, they were admitted to the μακαρίαν ὄψιν, or *beatific vision*, and were initiated into the most blessed of all mysteries."

The preceding relation principally concerns THE GREATER MYSTERIES. The first and most important ceremony in the LESSER MYSTERIES of Eleusis was the purification of

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the body by water, intended to inculcate the necessity of a similar purification of the soul from the impure adhesion of vicious passions and propensities; and it is remarkable, that the officer assisting upon that solemn occasion was called Ὑδρανος, from ὑδωρ, *water*. After ablution, the aspirant was clothed in a linen vestment, the emblem of purity, and we are informed, in the Ayeen Akbery, that the Brahmin-candidate, in the first stage of probation, was arrayed "in a linen garment without suture." But the mystic temple itself, as described by Apuleius, was *ædes amplissima*; according to Vitruvius, it was *immani magnitudine*; and, according to Strabo, it was capable of holding as large a number as a theatre. If these several authors had intended to describe the pagodas of Salsette and of Elephanta, could they have done it with more characteristic accuracy? temples, of which the former, according to M. Niebuhr, is a square of 120 feet, and in the latter of which, if we are rightly informed in the seventh volume of the Archæologia, the grand altar alone is elevated to the astonishing height of twenty-seven feet. The gloomy avenues surrounding them have been also particularised, in which an overwhelming dread and horror seised the be-

nighted

nighted wanderer: and, with respect to the gaudy shows and splendid scenery occasionally displayed to the view of the initiated in their recesses; who, that beholds the superb decorations, the richly-painted walls, and carved imagery, in the modern pagodas; who, that considers the beauty of the colours, and the ingenuity of the devices, conspicuous in many of the manufactures of India, whether in gold and silver enamel, in boxes curiously inlaid with ivory, in carpets of silk richly flowered, and linens stained with variegated dies; can possibly entertain a doubt of the ability of the antient Indians strikingly to portray, on canvas or otherwise, the allegorical visions, in which the genius of the nation takes so much delight; the amaranthine bowers, in which beatified spirits are supposed to reside, and the Elysian plains of EENDRA's voluptuous paradise?

The initiated, in the Grecian temples, were also crowned with myrtle, and the priests of Mithra were invariably decked with a rich tiara, wound about with the same foliage. Finally, the hierophant, that is, *the revealer of sacred things*, in the Eleusinian mysteries, was arrayed in the habit and adorned with the symbols of the great Creator of the world,

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of whom in those mysteries he was supposed to be the substitute, and revered as the emblem. He was attended in his sacred office by three assistant ministers, of whom the first was called Δαδυχος, or the torch-bearer; he was intended to represent the SUN. The second was denominated Κηρυξ, or the herald; he was considered as the type of the planet MERCURY. The third was called Ὁ ἐπι Βωμω, or the minister of the altar, and he was venerated as the symbol of the MOON. The same characteristic distinctions doubtles prevailed in those of India, where the Sun, Moon, and Mercury, under the name of Budha, for ever occur in the varied page of their mythology. There, perhaps, as in the rites of Mithra in Persia, the chief gods attended in the assumed characters of the various constellations. Their physical theology, which led them, in various instances, to consider the Deity as an incarnate agent upon earth, would naturally lead them in these mysterious institutions to shadow out, under the person of the high-presiding Brahmin, the supreme Creator of all things, and to decorate that sacred personage (the symbolical representation of Deity) after the manner of the Persian Mithra, with a loosely-floating tunic of a bright cerulean tincture,

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and spangled with innumerable stars. At the same time, their great attachment to astronomy would induce them to consider the priests, who officiated around him, as representing the planetary train moving in their several stations by his immediate command and influence, and clothed with brightness from the reflection of his own transcendent glory.

After having thus described, as far as they have been revealed to us by Apuleius and other antient writers, the Mithriac mysteries, I come at length to detail the yet unparallelled sufferings endured in

The Fourth Asherum, or State of SANIASSI; and the Series of exquisite Tortures voluntarily inflicted on Himself by the penitent YOGEE.

These two states may be considered as the last stage of the terrestrial journey of the Metempsychosis. With them the dreadful period of probation closes; with them the fire of the human ordeal is finally extinguished. The word Saniassi, as explained in the Geeta, p. 124, signifies the forsaking of all actions which

which are desirable. If we might judge from the conduct of those who bear the name, it might with more truth be rendered the performing of all actions that can excite disgust and impress horror on the human soul. The word YOGEE, or, as some write it, JOGUE, is derived from a root signifying *devotion*. By the Saniassi is properly to be understood the Brahmin in his fourth and highest degree of spiritual discipline, prescribed in the Vedas for those of that cast who may possess fortitude of mind and vigour of body sufficient to undergo those excruciating severities, which, when resolutely persevered in to the last, have power to unbar the gates of eternity and introduce the performer immediately into paradise. The Yogee is properly a voluntary penitent, who aspires to the honours and distinction of a Saniassi, and who endeavours to rival, if not exceed, him in the number and degree of his aggravated sufferings. All the writers of the antient world, and most of the moderns, have confounded the two characters; and the name of Saniassi and Yogee have been promiscuously applied. The antients, indeed, ranked all the race of these austere penitents under the title of gymnosophists, or *naked philosophers*. The Brahmin-Saniassi, however, does not wander

 about

about entirely naked, although the Yogee rejects all covering, scorning, amidst his divine absorption, to bestow one thought on the contemptible clay that holds in bondage his struggling soul. I shall first delineate the rigid principles and deliberate cruelties inflicted on himself by the Saniassi. I shall then enter into rather an extensive detail of what classical writers have related concerning the antient gymnosophist, and what, from modern writers and authentic living witnesses, I have been able to collect relative to the romantic doctrines and eccentric practices of those furious maniacs, the Yogees of the present day.

There is, as we have just intimated, an immense difference in the conduct of the devotee of the Brahmin cast and that of a devotee of an inferior tribe. The Saniassi is distinguished by the calm, the silent, dignity with which he suffers the series of complicated evils through which he is ordained to toil: the Yogee is wild and desultory in his devotion and ostentatious of the penances to which he voluntarily condemns himself. The former buries himself in the solitude of the desert, and is content that God and his own soul are conscious to the austerities which he endures: the latter seeks the crowded *bazar*, or market-

place,

place, and delights to scourge and lacerate himself in the sight of innumerable spectators. The professed design of both, however, is to detach their thoughts from all concern about sublunary objects; to be indifferent to hunger and thirst; to be insensible to shame and reproach; and, as far as it is possible for beings who have not yet passed the bourn of mortality, to emancipate the soul from its tabernacle of clay.

The leading principle that sways the mind of the Saniassi is by unexampled austerities to subdue the body, because he is convinced the subjugation of the passions will necessarily follow that conquest. He exults, therefore, in making the most painful sacrifices that can shock agonising nature. On entering this degree, he instantly, and without scruple, discards for ever the dearest friend and the tenderest relative. The affectionate wife, the blooming daughter, (for, the Saniassi is not always advanced in years,) in vain clasp his knees and solicit him to relax in his dreadful purpose: he is deaf to their cries and callous to their tears; he throws away every article of dress, except a scanty linen cloth of a yellow colour which girds his waist, and, with a pitcher in one hand and a pilgrim's staff in the

other, he hurries away to the desert, never to return. Famine and misery are the companions of his solitude. Absorbed in profound meditation on the Deity, he never violates the sacred silence in which his lips are sealed, except to pronounce the mystic word AWAN, which is the commencement of the Vedas.* His food is the fruits and herbage that spontaneously spring up in the desert: if these fail him, the laws of his severe order permit him to go to the nearest village and beg a handful of boiled rice, or other food, which he eats on the spot; if they throw it on the ground, he takes it up with his mouth, swallowing only as much as will serve to sustain life. The sole business of that life is incessant mental prayer and intense contemplation. These they consider as uniting them intimately to the Deity and enduing them with a portion of his power. Their energy is inexpressible: it is felt through all the works of nature and through all the classes of existence. It can call down the stars from heaven and bring up dæmons from the lowest bobun of Naraka. To such a length does their fanaticism on this point extend, as to lead them to conceive that they can, by their united power, actually disembody

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 224.

discmbody the soul, which for a while leaves its earthy mansion in utter insensibility; and, after taking a wide ethereal flight, returns to animate the breathless clod.

A curious story of this kind is related by Father Bouchet, treating concerning the Metempsychosis, in the Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses; which, on such a subject, it would be unpardonable to omit, and which is as follows:

An antient sovereign of India, by name Veramarken, having, by intense devotion, obtained this art of occasionally disengaging the soul from its terrestrial prison, was so delighted with his new acquisition, that, instead of attending to the duties ot his splendid and important station upon this globe of earth, he was perpetually exploring the ethereal regions and soaring amidst the superior orbs. At those periods, in which he meditated this aëreal excursion, it was his practice to retire with only one confidential slave into the midst of a gloomy unfrequented grove, and to his care he consigned, during the absence of his soul, that inferior and contemptible portion of himself, which, however, decorated with royal robes and a resplendent crown, was accustomed to sit upon the throne of Asia, and

was the object of little less than idolatry to the admiring crowd. A too frequent repetition of this practice, and an unguarded recital of the mystic prayer, called the MANDIRAM, by which his soul was released, in the hearing of the slave, excited a strong desire in the soul of the latter to undertake a similar flight into the ethereal regions. Attending diligently, therefore, to the actions of Veramarken, and precisely learning the words of the MANDIRAM, he resolved the first opportunity to attempt the temporary emancipation of his own soul; and, one day, when the monarch made a longer stay than usual in the ethereal fields, he fell to fervent prayer, and repeated the MANDIRAM, when, in an instant, his soul, taking its flight from his body, entered that of his master. He was now a king, and too well pleased with his new form and habiliments to think of returning to his former abject state. To prevent, therefore, his own body from being re-animated when the soul of Veramarken returned, he cut off its head, and stalked away to the palace in all the grandeur of arrogated royalty, where he received the honours due to his late master, and shared in his stead the embraces of his young and beautiful bride.

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The soul of the degraded monarch now winged its flight towards the well-known grove, and its horror, as well at finding its own receptacle vanished, as at beholding the headless trunk of the slave, may be conceived but cannot be expressed. However irksome he might formerly have esteemed human existence, he now began to think, that a magnificent throne and a lovely consort, added to the possession of the great secret of the MANDIRAM, might still have rendered tolerable the remaining years of its sojourning in the veil of mortality. The reflection filled the pensive spirit with intolerable anguish; it kept hovering, all forlorn and pensive, amidst the shades of that baleful grove, and made them resound with its bitter wailings. At length, the compassionate "goddess of his former devotion" (Bhavani, we must suppose, the Indian Venus) prepared for the royal fugitive the beautiful body of a parrot, in which he sped away to the court, alas! only to be the distracted witness of his slave seated on a throne which had descended to himself from a long line of illustrious ancestors, and to see him share the affectionate caresses intended for Veramarken. As the hapless bird, under the impression of these melancholy sen-

timents, flew from one apartment to the other, he was caught by a domestic of the palace, and, for the admirable beauty of his plumage, presented, to the queen, who detained him prisoner in her own chamber; and thus was the unfortunate monarch, who had possessed a throne and had ranged the skies, condemned to perpetual imprisonment, as well as to be a still nearer spectator of the rights of a king and a husband usurped. The secret would never have been known, had not a holy Saniassi, who, by the power of absorption, could penetrate into the past, the present, and the future, some ages after revealed it for the benefit of the sovereigns of India, and as a warning to them not to put too much confidence in their favourites.

At all times the Saniassi beholds with indifference whatever excites human delight or inspires vulgar mortals with aversion and terror; but, when more particularly engaged at his devotions, there is no object in nature so horrible as in the smallest degree to appal him, nor so enchanting as for one moment to seduce his fixed affections from fervid contemplation of the supreme BRAHME. The most dreadful thunders rolling over his head, balls of fire bursting from the tempestuous clouds

and

and ploughing up the ground in every direction around him, even the earth itself convulsed and rocking beneath him, have no power to dismay the soul of the undaunted, the absorbed, Saniassi. That soul is a native of a more elevated region, soars in a purer air. and revolves in a nobler sphere. The soul of the Saniassi is with the Deity who made the worlds and commands the subject elements.

It is the boast of the Saniassi to sacrifice every human feeling and passion at the shrine of devotion. The rains, which, during the annual inundations, descend in tropical regions with such resistless violence, and sweep every thing before them, molest not the inflexible devotee of the south; nor is the naked northern Anchorite observed to shiver amidst the incessant snows that fall upon the summits of Heemacote, the antient Imaus, and encircle up to his neck the human statue in the holy mountains of the Brahmins. Let a table be spread with the most delicious viands that ever charmed the eye or feasted the appetite of the daintiest epicure; place the table, thus abundantly and delicately spread, before the Saniassi; although he be emaciated with long-continued famine, and although at the

same

same time he feel the sharpest pangs of corrosive hunger, he will avert his eye from it with disdain or gaze upon the luxurious banquet with calm indifference. Let strains of the most excellent melody warble around him, the passages of his ears are impervious to sounds, which, in other breasts, would awaken ecstacy and endanger reason. Let nymphs of the most transcendant beauty, blooming, lovely, and wanton, as those that sported of old with Creeshna on the hallowed plains of Mathura, weave in his presence the airy dance, the Saniassi is conscious to no tumults of rising passion, but continues, in thought and act,

> Chaste as the icicle
> That's curdled by the frost from purest snow,
> And hangs on Dian's temple.

The most delicious odours, exhaled from the spice-beds of a garden of Oriental perfumes, have no fragrance for him; to the most beautiful colours he is *blind*; amidst the most excruciating torments he is *dumb*.

In effect, by long continued perseverance in these labourious but unnatural efforts to subdue his *mortal part*, the corporeal functions by degrees lose their energy, and the mental faculties are clouded and overwhelmed. Grown

torpid

torpid through inactivity and wrapt in holy insensibility, the Saniassi is affected by nothing that occurs within the bounded circle of human nature. He has no interest in any object below the stars, the native region of his aspiring soul. In vain, therefore, to him do the seasons revolve on this terrestrial globe; in vain does the sun enlighten it with his all-vivifying ray; in vain do the nutritious dews and genial showers descend and fertilise it. He feels no more delight, when returning spring arrays its renovated aspect in beauty and verdure, than he is capable of emotion, when its arid surface is parched with continued drought and the famished herd perish by thousands on the sterile plains. He is no more refreshed by the cooling zephyr that wafts vigour and salubrity to its fainting inhabitants, than he is annoyed by the burning winds from the desert, that bring pestilence and death in their train, and sweep whole nations of his fellow-creatures to the gulph of destruction.

Inflexibly adhering to this resolute indifference, the avenues of his soul are barred against the insidious assaults of those delusive passions that secretly undermine and often subvert the fortitude of the sublimest philoso-

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phers and the most rigid disciplinarians. He is no more to be soothed by the suggestions of *adulation* in its most pleasing form, than he is to be terrified by the loudest clamours of *reproach*. *Ambition* and *power* can have no influence over the man who looks down upon thrones with scorn, who considers the scanty and tattered fragment of yellow linen that girds his loins as of value far more transcendant than the embroidered robe of majesty; and who looks upon himself to be a portion of that Deity, into whose infinite essence he is soon to be wholly and eternally absorbed. *Avarice* cannot influence the mind that is rich in the countless treasures of immortality; a mind that esteems gold as dross and to whom rubies have lost their lustre and value. In fine, the highest distinction, to which the Saniassi aspires, is a state of invincible apathy. By long habits of indifference, he becomes inanimate as a piece of wood or stone; and, though he mechanically respires the vital air, he is to all the purposes of active life *defunct*. In consequence of these unexampled severities, and this invincible abstraction from every thing finite, the veneration which the whole Indian nation entertain for the Saniassis is beyond all conception. Veeshnu himself re-

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veres them: to whatsoever object they touch they impart sanctity, and the very dust of their feet is consecrated, from the steeps of Caucasus to the point of Comorin!!!

CHAPTER IV.

The Soul, passing through its several Stages of Probation in the Veil of Mortality, not inelegantly compared by the Antients to the AURELIA, *and the various Vicissitudes which that beautiful Insect undergoes in its Progress to Maturity. — The natural History of the* CHRYSALIS, *or* AURELIA, *considered, which necessarily and immediately introduces the noble Greek Allegory of* CUPID *and* PSYCHE, *of an Origin undoubtedly* ASIATIC. — *The sublime Moral, evidently intended to be inculcated through the Whole of that Allegory, explained by Reference to numerous Gems and Sculptures of Antiquity, of beautiful Design and elaborate Execution.*

THIS anxious impatience, this ardent fever, of the soul panting after its immortal rest, and ascending progressively through the stages of purity to that final abode, THE DEITY; these incessant efforts of the devout Brahmins to stifle every ebullition of human passion, and live upon earth as if they

they were already, and in reality, disembodied, cannot fail to remind the classical reader of the noble and beautiful allegory, recorded in Apuleius and other antient writers, relative to the sufferings of the charming Ψυχη, or Psyche. This celestial progeny, Psyche, or, in other words, the *human soul personified*, was generally represented by the antients under the form of a beautiful young virgin with the wings of a butterfly; and, sometimes, on antique gems and marbles, she is portrayed under the form of the aurelia itself, in the natural history of which insect we may discover the reason as well as the force of the comparison. The general outline of that history is, in brief, as follows: — The aurelia is, in the first stage of its existence, a common grub, or worm, and lies, during the winter, in a state of torpor, apparently dead. When the genial spring renovates nature, it bursts its prison, and issues forth, as it were, to new life, arrayed in beautiful attire. The Egyptians thought this a just and striking emblem of the human soul, which, after a long imprisonment in a human form, at length, bursts its terrestrial bonds and immerges into immortality. Such, I say, is the *general* outline of that history; but, having considered the sub-

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ject with some degree of attention, and trusting that I can place some parts of the parallel between the human soul and the aurelia in a new point of view, I shall not be afraid of disgusting my readers by entering into a more particular detail, relative to the growth and maturity of that insect. The whole mysterious fable, likewise, of CUPID and PSYCHE is so congenial with these Indian fictions, concerning the excruciating severities to be endured by the transmigrating soul, that I hope they will pardon my introducing it into these pages, since the title of my book professes to compare the leading features of the mythology of Egypt, Persia, and Greece.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE AURELIA AND THE FABLE OF CUPID AND PSYCHE CONSIDERED.

From the circumstance of the aurelia occurring, in most of the mystical writers of antiquity, as the picturesque emblem of the soul passing through the various stages of a mortal to an immortal state, there is great reason to believe those theological philosophers had vigilantly marked all the wonderful vicissitudes

which the chrysalis successively undergoes, and were scarcely less acquainted with its history than the curious and exploring sons of modern philosophy. The first state of the chrysalis is a state nearly approaching to insensibility; it scarcely appears to be endued with life; its figure is conical; it has neither legs to walk nor wings to fly, and it can take no nourishment, for it has no organs to receive or digest it. Is not this a just picture of the human soul in infancy, when it rests, as it were, dormant in its prison of clay, incapable of exertion and insensible to the dictates of instruction and wisdom?

Brought forth amidst the autumnal gloom, and chilled by the ungenial damps and rigours of that inclement season, the embryo-aurelia remains in this inactive state during the early wintry months. As the cold and darkness of winter pass away, and the sun begins to exert its power both on the animal and vegetable creation, the apparently-insensible atom shews some principles of life, and, gradually shedding its coat, or skin, and putting on a more brilliant hue, it begins to feed on the tender springing herbage of the infant year. The variety and exquisite beauty of the colours of the different species of the cater-

pillar

pillar in this state are infinite and admirable. Some of them are superbly clothed in brilliant gold, whence, in fact, they obtain the name of chrysalis, from χρυσος, gold, as they are called aurelia, from *aurum*; and it is this brilliant insect by which principally the antients intended to symbolise the soul, that radiant emanation of the Divinity in man. Some are of an elegant green colour, others of a beautiful and bright yellow. They successively change these colours as they advance towards maturity through the different stages of a caterpillar, a chrysalis, and a butterfly; and, by this change, as well as by that of their external coat, exhibit ample evidence of that *metamorphosis* actually taking place, which formed the basis of the pleasing fables of the antients on this subject. As the vernal season increases, the aurelia also increases in vigour, sprightliness, and magnitude, till, at length, its tender wings bursting from the membranous integument that confined them, it mounts into the air a perfect butterfly and joyfully spreads its richly-variegated pinions to the sun.

May not the aurelia, in this improved stage of its existence, be considered as a striking emblem of the soul arrived at the period of

maturity in the human state, when education has lent all its aid to expand the daring genius and ripen to perfection the fervid thought; when man, liberated from the restrictions of grave tutors and the fetters of parental authority, launches forth into the vast ocean of life and ranges uncontrolled wheresoever his inclination leads him? This the antients esteemed the period of the greatest danger; in this state are felt the most furious assaults of the various passions, those vultures of the soul, each alternately exerting its baneful influence to harass it in its terrestrial journey, to stagger its resolution, and undermine all the principles of virtue. Ambition fires it with the desire of unbounded sway, avarice entangles it in a thousand sordid and perplexing cares, envy stimulates it to the perpetration of base and criminal designs, while love, all-conquering love, renders it its abject slave. To guard the spiritual pilgrim from the despotism of the last-named tyrant was the principal purpose of the antient theologists in the following beautifnl allegory of Cupid and Psyche, which I have abridged from Apuleius, it being of such a length as to engross nearly the whole of the fifth and sixth book of the Metamorphoseos of that author.

In a certain city, says Apuleius, there lived a king and queen who were blest with three daughters, all of great beauty; but the youngest, in that point, infinitely outshone the two others. Her charms, indeed, were so transcendent, that nature seemed to have exhausted all her skill in forming her. The fame of this the most lovely creature whom human eye had ever beheld ran rapidly through all the neighbouring regions, and multitudes flocked from all quarters to admire and adore. All that saw her exclaimed, with rapture, that Venus in person was come down from heaven to visit mankind; and the rites of Cnidos, Paphos, and Cythera, were transferred to the city, sanctified by the residence of the matchless virgin. *Sacra deæ (Veneris) deseruntur, templa deformantur, pulvinaria proteruntur, ceremoniæ negliguntur, incoronata simulachra. et aræ viduæ frigido cinere fœdatæ.** The real Venus, equally incensed and indignant at this treatment, and jealous of her too-fortunate rival, incites her son Cupid to revenge the wrongs of his mother. "My beloved Cupid," says the distracted parent, "a presumptuous mortal dares to contest with me the palm of beauty and usurps the rites paid at the altars

* Apuleii Metamorph. lib. iv. p. 90, edit Bipont. oct. 1788.

of thy native Paphos: oh! fly instantly to the detested city of her abode, arm thyself with one of thy keenest arrows, and, pointing it to her heart, let her languish in all the agonies of unpitied love: or, if that be impossible, from the resistless influence of her charms, let her affections be fixed on some worthless monster in the form of a man who may be equally distinguished for his crimes and his poverty, who may inflict on her the most unheard-of cruelties, and render her the most miserable, as she is the most beautiful, of her sex." Cupid, obedient to the stern mandate, immediately hasted away to the palace of Psyche's father, his bow was bent, and the shaft, charged full of the soft poison of love, was ready to be launched at the unsuspecting fair: the sight, however, of such amazing beauty disarmed the furious young deity. His hand trembled, his foot faultered, and he became the victim of those charms of which he intended to have been the destroyer.

In the mean time, Psyche, though gazed at, admired, and praised, by all, seemed to be doomed to waste the bloom of youth in barren celibacy. Her beauty was of that nature (for, in fact, Psyche is only the virtuous principle in the soul personified) that it inspired reveren-

tial

tial awe rather than kindled ardent attachment in the beholder. Even those, who were inflamed with affection for her, dared not approach the idol of their devotion nor presumed to ask her hand in marriage. Although, therefore, her sisters, who were of more accessible beauty, were married to two powerful sovereigns, the lovely, the forlorn, Psyche could gain no suitor of any rank; but, like some silent solitary statue, surveyed only with delight for its admirable symmetry, received not the caresses of nuptial love nor glowed with the fervour of mutual affection. The wearisome day was consumed in sighs; her pillow by night was bathed with tears: she sometimes bewailed aloud her miserable situation; nor forbore, at others, to execrate that distinguished beauty, the lustre of which subjected her to so hard a fate.

Penetrated with anguish at the distress of their disconsolate daughter, anxious for the restoration of her tranquillity, and fearful lest her health should be injured by her continual grief, her royal parents consult the Delphic oracle upon her unhappy case, and the dreadful mandate of Apollo could not fail to inspire both their own minds, and that of the

tender Psyche, with grief and horror inexpressible.

Montis in excelsi scopulo desiste puellam,
Ornatam mundo funerci thalami, &c, &c.*

"Let the maid be conveyed to the rocky summit of a lofty mountain, and there arrayed, not in bridal robes, but in funeral ornaments; and, wrapt in the shroud of death, let her await the husband she so anxiously solicits." She is not doomed to marry any being of mortal descent;

Sed sævum atque ferum, vipereumque malum,

"but a being fierce, implacable, and malignant as the viper;" a being terrible on earth and formidable to the gods themselves.†

The moral of the allegory hitherto must be evident to the meanest capacity: it is the virtuous principle of the human soul overcome by concupiscence, that is, carnal affection as opposed to spiritual, and the punishment we see rapidly follows. The indulgence of sensual passions is the death of that virtuous principle: the soul itself bocomes defunct in a moral sense, and therefore Psyche is to be veiled

* See Apuleii Metamorph. p. 93. † Ibid.

veiled in a shroud, and exposed to do penance on a high and desolate mountain.

By this dreadful oracle, not only the royal family but the whole city was overwhelmed with grief and consternation. All classes of people made the cause of Psyche their own, and every quarter resounded with cries and lamentations. It was, however, indispensably necessary, after consulting the god, punctually to obey his sublime, though stern, behest. The funeral solemnities and the deathful robe were prepared; the day was fixed for the performance of this grand sacrifice of a beautiful virgin to DEATH and HYMEN, whose torches were now, for the first time, to unite their flames, and gleam on the stupified populace their dreadful glare. At length that day arrived; and both court and city, moving forward in one vast cavalcade of woe, accompanied Psyche to the fatal mountain. Steeped in tears, and torn with inexpressible agony, she slowly proceeded to the solemnization of what were to be at once her bridal and funeral rites. The original is highly beautiful: *et lachrymosa Psyche comitatur non nuptias sed exsequias suas.*

Arrived at the spot marked out by the oracle, which was the highest eminence of the

mountain,

mountain, she was there left by her miserable parents and the sorrowing multitude, who, returning to the city, gave way to the violence of their grief as for a beloved relative deceased, and both the walls of the palace and the private houses of the citizens were hung with sable, in token of respect to her memory. In the mean time, Psyche, deeply regretting her past impatience under the restraints of virtuous celibacy, remained in her lofty exiled situation in a state of the utmost suspense and anxiety. It was not long before a zephyr embraced the trembling fair one, and bore her, gently gliding through the air, into the bosom of a spacious valley, rich with verdure and fragrant with flowers. Here, reclined upon a bed of soft aromatic herbage, the tumult of her mind gradually subsided, her fears were dissipated, and her senses enlivened. After a short repose, curiosity induced her to rise and explore the recesses of a spacious wood adjoining, where music, more sweet than mortal ever before heard, warbled from the branches, and fountains of the purest water perpetually played, cooling and refreshing the air, heated by the beams of a meridian sun. Proceeding farther, she entered a stately palace, the roofs of which glittered with gold and silver: while

its variegated pavement sparkled with precious stones of the loveliest hue and the richest brilliancy. What appeared to her most wonderful of all was, that this beautiful palace was without an owner; for, as she wandered through its rich saloons, no human being met her *eye*, though the most melodious voices from invisible forms accosted her *ear*, incessantly inviting her to make that palace her constant residence, to bathe by day, without restraint, in its ambrosial fountains, and repose by night, without fear, on its gilded sofas; sofas of a texture far softer than the springing down of the cygnet; for, the silk which formed them was woven in a celestial loom. Deriving confidence from this soothing address, Psyche now sat down to partake of a banquet prepared by the same invisible agents. The most elegant viands were successively served up in golden dishes, and wines of exquisite flavour sparkled before her in agate vases. To this miraculous banquet succeeded concerts of soft music from immortal harps, whose tender thrilling strains pierced the soul of the delighted virgin and dissolved it in voluptuous languor. These were but a prelude to the refined pleasures of nuptial love, which, with advancing night, were rapidly

approaching

approaching; when Psyche, with mingled terror and transport, was to clasp the mysterious husband promised her by heaven.

The star of evening, friendly to Hymen, already began to glimmer on high in the blue vault of heaven. Fatigued with the alternate sufferings and joy, produced by the wonderful vicissitudes of the past day, and deriving some gleams of hope from what she had already experienced, yet still trembling at the dreadful oracle, Psyche at length retired to the nuptial bed, which her unseen attendants had prepared, sprinkled with odours and decorated with flowers. The solitude of the scene and the darkness of surrounding night added to her perplexity, and filled with unutterable solicitude the throbbing bosom of the virgin. After a short interval of dreadful suspense, a voice, benign and soothing, bade her dismiss unnecessary terror, and, in an instant, she found herself locked in the fond embrace of a husband, who, though unknown, inspired no terror; but, on the contrary, whose precipitate retreat, on the approach of day, filled her with concern and grief. Invisible nymphs now hover around the deserted bed, who with harmonious voices, hail the new bride, and invite her to a

repetition

repetition of the pleasures of the preceding day. She ranges with fresh delight through the delicious gardens and all the apartments of that magnificent palace; she listens to the warbling of the birds and the murmuring of the fountains; she again bathes in the stream her beauteous limbs, sits down to the delicious repast, is regaled with music by celestial bands, and, at night, no longer reluctant, retires to the same bed, and again enjoys the embrace of her affectionate, but fugitive, husband.

A long period elapsed in this unceasing round of daily pleasure, and this nightly commerce with a bridegroom, whom as yet she had not beheld. All remembrance of her former sufferings was erased from her mind, while her invisible attendants prevented her feeling the tedium of solitude and the absence of her lord during the day, by perpetually varying the amusements of the enchanting paradise that held her a willing prisoner. Her happiness might have continued for ever could she have KEPT A SECRET, or restrained within due bounds that fatal CURIOSITY which too often betrays the unthinking part of her sex into errors never to be remedied.

Anxiety for the fate of their daughter had long banished repose from the bosom of her disconsolate parents. They prevailed on her two sisters to undertake the task of exploring her retreat; and the latter repaired, without delay, to the desolate mountain, on whose summit she had been exposed. The same gentle zephyr, that had conveyed Psyche to the happy valley, was also ready to conduct her sisters to that secluded spot, and they were soon wafted to the palace of delights. Psyche had been forewarned, by her nightly paramour, of their intended visit, and, at first, received his strict injunctions not to have any communion with them, as the interview might be productive of the most dreadful calamities to all parties. She promised to obey those injunctions; but growing, in consequence, dejected and melancholy, she obtained his permission to entertain them. The adventurous princesses were received with transport, shewn all the rarities of the castle, and dismissed to the court of their royal parents, but with the assurance that she was the happiest of women, and wedded to a husband, young, beautiful, finely accomplished, and ardently attached to her.

Burning with envy at her happy lot, these ungrateful sisters soon began to plot the ruin of the generous and unsuspecting Psyche. They took an opportunity of repeating their visit; and, insidiously inquiring into particulars concerning that husband, on whose charms she had so rapturously descanted, learned from her answers the fatal secret of his visiting her only during the night-season, and that she was a stranger to the sight though not to the embrace of her beloved consort. Having obtained this clue, these harpies in a female form retired to plan their diabolical project of plunging in inexpressible misery an amiable and affectionate sister; who, however, was again kindly cautioned by her husband not to listen to their artful and base insinuations to his prejudice. At their next interview, therefore, they alarmed her with dreadful apprehensions relating to the almost-forgotten oracle of Apollo, which had destined her to the arms of a monster, malignant and venomous as a viper; and they persuaded her, that, under the assumed appearance of a young man, in the bloom of life, she was actually married to a monstrous serpent, who, when satiated with her charms, would not fail to inflict upon her unheard-of cruelties, and

finally

finally put her to a miserable death. Struck with horror at this intimation, unable to account for her husband's continued reluctance to discover himself, and, at the same time, comparing the oracle with the nocturnal visit and clandestine embrace, Psyche confessed herself overcome by the force of their representation, and earnestly implored their advice towards extricating herself from the danger of impending destruction. The council given by her sisters was, that she should secretly convey a lighted lamp and a razor into some obscure recess of the chamber in which they slept; that, when the monster's eyes were sealed in slumber, she should, with the former, take the prohibited survey of his person, and, with the latter, sever his head from his body. By this resolute act alone could she avoid the miserable end to which she was, otherwise, inevitably devoted. The terrified Psyche promised compliance, and the princesses were again wafted back by the obedient zephyr. Psyche, determined faithfully to execute their pernicious counsels, concealed in her chamber the lamp which was to reveal, and the razor which was to immolate, her sleeping husband. The instant his eyes were closed, she stole softly from his side, and seising, with impatience,

tience, the concealed lamp, hurried to the bed-side to gratify herself with a survey so long and rigidly denied, and dispatch at once her intended murderer. She elevates the lamp, and, by its light, discovers no formidable monster, no envenomed serpent, but the lovely, the enchanting, Cupid, the god of young desires, conspicuous by the vermilion that glowed on his cheek and lips, by the purple hue of his waving wings, and by the exquisite beauty of his yellow tresses. The rashness and cruelty of the bloody act she was about to perpetrate overwhelmed her with horror and filled her bosom with remorse and anguish inexpressible. She gazed upon him again and again with renewed delight, and she would have plunged in her own throat the fatal weapon, but, in the midst of her perturbation, it had fallen out of her languid grasp. At the foot of the bed lay the bow and arrows of the juvenile god. She admired the elegance of the workmanship, and, trying the point of one of the arrows, she unfortunately wounded her finger. That wound, however, was trivial compared with the greater one which now rankled in her heart, and she continued fixing her enraptured eyes upon the sleeping god. As she advanced nearer him,

by fatal mischance, a drop of burning oil, from the lamp which she held in her hand, fell upon the right shoulder of Cupid, who, being awaked by the anguish of the wound, immediately spread his wings for flight. In vain did Psyche attempt to arrest that flight by entreaty, by tears, and by forcibly grasping his feet. The frowning deity, springing up into the air, raised her up with him a little way, and then let her fall to the ground. Alighting upon a cypress-tree that grew near, from its funeral boughs, the emblem of his *deceased affection*, he bitterly upbraided her for her curiosity and want of confidence in his counsels: he then fled away and entirely disappeared.

The anguish, which, upon this event, seised the mind of Psyche, it is impossible to describe. No gentle voices from invisible attendants now soothed her extreme affliction; no music from immortal harps warbled sweet symphonies in her ear. All was hushed, all was silent, as death and midnight. On a sudden, while she stood wringing her hands in frantic grief, a thunder-storm, bursting on the palace, shivered it to atoms; and the garden of delights was converted into a blasted and barren heath, through which an

impetuous

impetuous river rolled. Into that river she instantly plunged, in the fond hope of burying herself and all her miseries in the friendly wave. But the final period of those miseries was not yet arrived; and the river, out of respect to the wife of Cupid, immediately threw her back upon the banks. Presently after she sees the god Pan and solicits his advice. Pan condoles with her, but acquaints her there is no hope for her unless she can make her peace with Cupid. In pursuit of the injured deity, she continues for a long time wandering about the earth; and, in the course of her peregrination, she meets with one of those sisters, whose perfidious counsel was the cause of her ruin, and upon whom, therefore, she was determined to be revenged. She recites to her the story of her melancholy adventures; informs her that Cupid had repudiated her as a punishment for her curiosity; and, moreover, had threatened, as a more signal infliction of his vengeance upon herself, to marry one of her sisters. Inflamed with hope that she might be the intended bride, her ambitious sister immediately hurried away to the rocky eminence, whence she had formerly been wafted to the palace of Cupid; and, not doubting but that the same

 zephyr

zephyr would safely transport her thither, she let herself drop down from the summit and was dashed in pieces on the rocks below. Shortly after, meeting the other sister, she deluded her with the same story, and she also miserably perished in the same snare. In this respect, Psyche was not actuated by the dictates of her accustomed benevolence; but, let it be remembered, her wrongs were trying and aggravated; and, when once VIRTUE is fled, RAGE and REVENGE, with a thousand other turbulent passions, rush in, unresisted, upon the defenceless soul.

In the mean time, Venus, incensed beyond measure both at the failure of her scheme for Psyche's destruction and at the torments which Cupid suffered from his wound, resolved to find out her rival upon earth and inflict upon her the most exemplary vengeance. That unhappy exile was still traversing the earth in search of her dear Cupid, and accidentally coming to a temple of Ceres, she collected, from a neighbouring corn-field, a few ears of loose grain, and devoutly offered them up to that goddess, earnestly entreating her to take an unhappy female under her protection, and shield her from the menaced fury of the mother of Cupid. Ceres vouchsafed her no

other

other answer than that she would not be actively hostile to her nor betray the path of her flight to Venus. She met with nearly the same reply from Juno, at whose shrine she afterwards paid homage and offered sacrifice. At length she resolved to prostrate herself before the cruel Venus herself, with whom it was possible she might find Cupid, who, she flattered herself, would relent at her tears and prevail on his mother to relent also. In both these expectations she was cruelly disappointed; for, when she came to her temple, the haughty vindictive goddess refused to receive, as a suppliant, her whose crimes no repentance could obliterate, no prayers atone for, no tears expunge. She was determined to seise her as a victim, but *that* she thought beneath her dignity to do at a time when she came to her altars in a humble and supplicating posture. She, therefore, ascended Olympus and entreated Jupiter to dispatch Mercury to bring Psyche before her as a guilty criminal destined to appease the vengeance of an insulted goddess.

Before the swift Mercury could execute his cruel mission, CUSTOM, one of the confidential domestics of Venus, happened to meet with Psyche, and, seising her, dragged her

by the hair of her head to her mistress. Venus, the instant she saw her rival, in a paroxysm of rage, flew at her, tore her beautiful and flowing tresses, and rent in pieces her silken robe; violently beating her about the head and wounding that face whose exquisite beauty had won from her so many admirers. But this was not all, Psyche was now under the absolute dominion of Venus, (ILLICIT LOVE,) who makes mere drudges of her votaries and SUBJECTS THEM TO THE MOST PAINFUL AND TOILSOME SERVITUDE.

The first task which Venus, the *mater sæva cupidinum*, imposed upon the beautiful Psyche, was to separate into distinct parcels an immense heap of grains intermixed, consisting of wheat, barley, millet, poppies, peas, lentils, and beans, all promiscuously jumbled together. She was enjoined to perform this tedious and difficult task before night, and Venus appointed two others of her attendants, SORROW and ANXIETY, to be her vigilant guardians and companions. Psyche was thunderstruck at this severe injunction, to perform, within so short a period, what she conceived to be totally impracticable in the course of a prolonged life, and remained, for some time, in stupid insensibility. But a brood

of

of industrious ants, who tenanted a neighbouring hillock, hearing the injunction, took compassion upon her and separated the grain for her within the allotted time. The second task enjoined her was to fetch her severe tyrant a lock of golden wool from certain sheep that fed on the steep and almost-inaccessible banks of a broad and rapid river, which must be passed before she could reach the demanded object. Psyche, despairing of being able either to pass the stream, or obtain the lock of golden wool, was just on the point of again attempting to drown herself, when a reed softly whispered certain articulate sounds, from which she learned how to get possession of the wool without danger, which she in consequence obtained, and exultingly bore to Venus. All this ready and punctual performance of tasks, scarcely practicable by human nature, was of no avail; Venus seemed to rise in the severity of her injunctions, in proportion to the promptitude of Psyche to execute them; and she now orders her to fetch her a pitcher of black and deadly water that issued from a fountain guarded by dragons. As she was considering with herself how this, the most terrible of her mandates yet issued, was to be accomplished, an eagle, pouncing down from

 above,

above, with his talons snatched the pitcher from her trembling hand, then, soaring away to the appointed fountain, filled it, and brought it back to Psyche, who carried it to Venus, and hoped that now, at least, her labours and sorrows would have their final consummation. But what pencil can adequately paint the horrors of the exhausted Psyche, when, instead of being instantly admitted to her forgiveness and the enjoyment of her former communion with Cupid, she received immediate and positive orders to visit the gloomy subterraneous regions of Pluto, and request of Proserpine a casket which might contain a portion of the beauty of the Stygian queen, to repair what Venus herself had lost by her anxiety and exertion in curing the wound of Cupid. She was commanded to use dispatch on this embassy, since there was shortly to be an assembly of the gods, in which it was impossible for Venus to appear with beauty the least impaired. Psyche, ignorant of any other way of visiting the infernal region than by death, interpreted this order into an injunction to kill herself, to which, being now plunged into the utmost grief and despair, she was by no means reluctant. To effect her own destruction with equal speed

and certainty, she immediately ascended a steep tower, with intent to throw herself headlong from it, and thus terminate her career of misery; but, just as she was on the point of executing her rash resolution, the benevolent, but invisible, genius, who had hitherto attended her through all her sufferings, addressed her in an audible voice from the tower, and bade her go to Tænarus, near Lacedæmon, where she would find a passage by which she might descend to the infernal regions; enjoining her rigidly to observe the following instructions during her journey thither and her return.

She was ordered to provide herself with two cakes, (and the reader will recollect that cakes and water are at this day offered in India to the dead,) bearing one of them in each hand; she was likewise to carry with her two pieces of money, which were to be borne in her mouth; she was told, that if she accidentally met in her way to the shades any person who might be in distress and crave her assistance not to take any notice, but to observe a religious silence and pursue her journey; that, when she arrived at the infernal river, and Charon demanded his fee for ferrying her over, one of the pieces of money which she carried

ried was his allotted fee, which she must suffer him to take out of her mouth; that she must pass without notice the numerous crowds of departed spirits who would cover the banks of Styx and solicit relief from her; and that, when arrived at the gate of Proserpine's palace, she must give one of the cakes to the great dog that guarded it, who would let her pass into the interior court. She was informed that Proserpine would receive her with great kindness and invite her to a noble entertainment, of which, however, she must by no means partake, but, sitting down upon the ground, make her solitary and abstemious repast upon black bread. She must then inform her of the occasion of her visit to that infernal kingdom, and, having solicited and received the precious casket, must hurry back with it to the regions of day.

On her return, she must pacify Cerberus with the other cake and fee Charon with the remaining piece of money, but must take especial care, during her return, not to be seduced by any consideration whatever to open the casket containing the portion of beauty sent by Proserpine to Venus. Psyche successfully executed her dangerous errand, and punctually obeyed all the injunctions given her

except

except the last; to observe *that* with equal fidelity proved too much for the powerful operations of female VANITY. She could not resist the inclination to examine the casket and appropriate to herself a small particle, at least, of the beauty intended to adorn the mother of Cupid.

Ah! too delusive Vanity, of what nameless evils, in every age, hast thou been the unfortunate source to the young and beautiful! With adventurous hand in a luckless hour the curious Psyche opened the casket, which, like the box of Pandora, contained nothing but misery for its ill-fated possessor. Instead of the rose of eternal youth, instead of the bloom of unfading beauty, that casket was stored only with a deadly, infernal, soporiferous, vapour, which in an instant overpowered all her faculties, and she sunk down upon the earth in a profound slumber. In that lethargic slumber she lay for some time, nor ever would have awaked from it, had not Cupid, now fully appeased and healed of his wound, fled out of the windows of his mother's palace to seek his dear, his long-lost, Psyche. His wonder was as great as his anguish was exquisite when he, at length, discovered her lying fast asleep upon the ground: but, immediately divining the

the cause, he exerted the portion of divinity which he enjoyed by being the offspring of a deity, and burst the charm that bound her. He waked her by gently wounding her with the point of his arrow; he collected together the fumes of the deadly vapour which had issued, and, returning them to the fatal casket, bade her carry it to his mother. He himself, in the mean time, winged his flight to heaven and laid the whole affair before Jupiter. Jupiter immediately called an assembly of the gods, and, with the aweful nod that shakes Olympus, not only himself consented to his marriage with Psyche, but insisted that Venus should no longer oppose their union. Mercury was dispatched in haste to bring Psyche up to heaven, and, *the period of her terrestrial sojourning and probation being over,* she drank ambrosia and became IMMORTAL. On occasion of her apotheosis and nuptials a magnificent banquet was prepared in heaven, at which all the gods were present, at which Apollo played upon the harp and even Venus herself danced. Psyche, thus solemnly reunited to Cupid, commenced a new career of happiness, not subject to interruption or decay; and the fruit of her renovated affection was a daughter named PLEASURE; that is, celestial

lestial and eternal pleasure opposed to that which is earthly and temporal.*

The general moral, intended to be inculcated throughout the preceding fable, must be obvious to the reader, although many of the circumstances recorded in it, being introduced merely for the sake of ornament, no direct or particular application can be made of every part of it. We can, however, collect from it, on the whole, that the antient Greeks, like the Brahmins, conceived there was no greater enemy to the soul, aspiring to the heights of purity and virtue, than carnal affection, symbolised by Venus, whose servant, CUSTOM, drags us on against our better inclinations and resolutions to criminal indulgence, and then delivers us over, by the command of her mistress, to be tormented by her two other servants, SORROW and ANXIETY. There are variety of designs, on antient gems and marbles, which still more strikingly and distinctly explain their meaning on this point, and many of these may be seen in Mountfaucon and other collections. On these sculptures Psyche is invariably designated with the wings of a butterfly, and sometimes a Cupid is represented as burning her wings, those wings on which she should mount

* Apuleij Metamorph. lib. vi. p. 135.

mount to heaven, with his flaming torch. Sometimes she is drawn kneeling, with her hands tied behind her; a certain mark of the abject slavery into which a soul is brought by the power of the passions. At other times she is to be seen bound to a tree, while Cupid is severely beating her with rods. In an engraving published by Spon, he is even armed with a hammer and chissel to bruise and torment her tender limbs. These gems and sculptures sufficiently mark the parallel sentiments entertained on this subject by the philosophers of Greece and of India; but in no country ever yet heard of, except the latter, have austerities been actually put in practice of such a dreadful and sanguinary complexion, as those voluntarily inflicted upon themselves by the penitents of the latter country.

CHAPTER V.

The Metempsychosis, or Wandering of the Soul, through various Spheres *and various* Bodies, *being believed in a far more extensive Degree in India than in antient Greece, and, in Fact, making an important Part of the religious Code of the Brahmins, has been productive of Doctrines and Practices far more romantic and extravagant in the former than in the latter Country.—A variety of Instances adduced in Proof of the above Assertion, as well in Regard to the supposed retrospective Power of that Soul to penetrate the Obscurity of past Ages and Events, as the singular Penances which the antient* GYMNOSOPHIST *and modern* YOGEE *alike inflicted upon themselves, to renovate their fallen State.—An extended Parallel drawn between those two Characters, both from antient and modern Sources of authentic Information.—The Self-Sacrifice of* CALANUS *and* ZARMANOCHAGAS, *by Fire, in the Times of Alexander and Augustus, contrasted with recent Instances of that Species of*

of public Suicide. — The real Origin of that dreadful Custom of the Indians investigated and explained.

THE Indian philosophers seem, at all times, to have carried their notions concerning the Metempsychosis to a point of greater extravagance than the Pythagoreans and Platonists; and those more extravagant notions impelled them to adopt severer modes of expiation and penance. The philosophers of Greece, at least those who alone truly merited that appellation, believed and felt that the soul was a degraded and fallen spirit, that the body was its terrestrial prison, that life was a state of expiation and discipline, and they considered death only as a passage to a more perfect and happy state, in which they should be reunited to the eternal source whence that soul emaned, the supreme BEATITUDE. It was this belief that supported the soul of SOCRATES in his dying moments, and disarmed of its terrors the poisoned bowl. It was the propagation of this sublime doctrine, which shines forth with such lustre in the Phædo of Plato, that procured to that philosopher the envied title of DIVINE. The Brahmins conceiving, as was before-observed, that,

that, by the power of abstracted meditation and absorption, they are able to penetrate into past as well as future scenes, have indulged on this subject speculations far more bold and extensive, and formed the result of those speculations into a regular system of religious belief and action. By this power, the contemplatist can trace his spiritual genealogy through successive spheres and animals for a hundred generations, and knows what particular punishment in one state unalterably attends the perpetration of crimes in another. Endued with this imaginary power, and incited by the wild phrenzy of superstition, he is for ever rolling back his eye upon the past periods of existence, and, for every calamity endured in the present state, he can instantly find a cause in the vices and follies of the state preceding. Disease imbibed with the breath of life is thus accounted for and rendered tolerable; since men, blind and lame from the womb, are only suffering penance for former crimes, and therefore sustain their hard fate with cheerfulness and resignation. "Physicians (says the Hindoo Sastra) assert that sickness originates in the animal constitution, but those skilled in the mystery of the Metempsychosis maintain that it is a punishment for

crimes committed in a former state."* It cannot fail of gratifying curiosity, however it may sometimes provoke laughter, to specify a few of those causes for terrestrial suffering enumerated in the same Sastra.

Thus, in regard to men, epilepsy is a punishment for one who has, in a previous existence, poisoned another. Blindness and madness are punishments, the first for murdering your parents, the last for having been disobedient and negligent of them; dumbness for having killed a sister; the stone for having committed incest; fevers, asthmas, indigestion, &c. &c. have also their whimsical causes assigned them, and the expiations are, in some instances, as whimsical as in others they are extremely severe; but, in general, are too tedious to be here enumerated. They consist, for the most part, of vast sums, given away in charity *to the Brahmins,* or in the long and dreadful fast of the Chanderayan. In respect to women, upon whom these uncivil Brahmins, impotent through age or austerities, seem to be uncommonly severe, it is asserted,† that a woman who survives her husband, which in India is a disgrace, was false to her husband

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 169.

† Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 172.

husband in the preceding state. The expiation: she must pass all her life in austerities, or put an end to her existence by burying herself in snow.—The woman, whose child dies, has, in a former state, exposed her child, which died in consequence of that exposure. The expiation: a cow of gold, with hoofs of silver, bestowed in charity.—A woman, who has only daughters, was inflamed with pride in her former existence, and was disrespectful to her husband. The expiation: let her feed *fifty Brahmins.*—I shall not torture the reader's patience with any more of these absurd details. Absurd, however, as they appear to us, they form the creed of the pious in India, who, considering the Brahmins as a portion of the Deity, are not in the least shocked by this barefaced monopoly of sacred donations by that avaricious order. So barefaced indeed is it, that, in a following page, it is asserted, that, whosoever shall give to the Brahmins sufficient ground for a house to stand upon, shall enjoy ten kulchs in paradise before he returns again to the earth; but, if he should be so generous as to bestow upon them a thousand head of cattle, his grand reward will be ten thousand years of bliss in paradise before he

revisits earth.* How different is the selfish maxim here inculcated from the following very enlarged and liberal sentiment in the Geeta. The disparity may, in some measure, be accounted for, by considering that it is the Deity, not the priest, that speaks. "They, who serve even *other gods* with a firm belief, in doing so, involuntarily worship *me*, I am he who partaketh of all worship, and I am their reward."†

We must now complete the dreadful picture of Indian penance which we are exhibiting, by more particularly introducing the reader to the Gymnosophist, or Yogee.

The YOGEES, or antient Gymnosophists, are, as their name, derived from γυμνος, *nudus*, and σοφος, *sapiens*, implies, absolutely divested of all covering, as well to shew how contemptible, in their opinion, the body is in comparison of the divine guest that inhabits it, as for convenience; since Dindamis, one of them, in his speech to Alexander, acutely enough observed, "*that* is the most suitable habitation for a philosopher which is the least encumbered with furniture." Of all the antient writers on this subject, Strabo perhaps is most to be depended upon, since he professes to have

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 135. † Geeta, p. 81.

have acquired his information, relative to India, from those who had been ambassadors at Palibothra, the present Patna. Strabo gives us two remarkable instances of the voluntary severities which two of these gymnosophists inflicted upon themselves: the first, far advanced in years, hoped to obtain heaven by lying constantly extended upon the hard ground without any covering, exposed to all the fervours of a tropical sun, and without any shelter from the drenching rains, which at particular seasons, descended in torrents.* The second, who was more in the vigour of life, laboured to obtain the same immortal boon by standing on one leg for a whole day, and bearing aloft, at the same time, with both his erected arms, an immense piece of wood.† Pliny acquaints us, that some gymnosophists would fix their eager and stedfast eyes upon the sun from the time of his rising till his setting; while others, at the same time, would stand on one foot, alternately varying the foot on which they stood, for a whole day, in the midst of burning sands, without shrinking or complaining. The original in pliny is as follows: "*Philosophos eorum, quos gymnosophistas vocant, ab exortu ad occasum perstare contuentes*

* Strabo, lib. xv. p. 491. † Ibid.

tuentes solem IMMOBILIBUS OCULIS, *ferventibus arenis toto die alternis pedibus consistere.*"* He might have added the epithet of *nudis* to *pedibus*; for, the gymnosophists, as the name implies, entirely reject every sort of covering for the body, even that which decency requires.

Cicero, speaking of the gymnosophists, warmly commends their invincible patience and undaunted fortitude. " These men, " says that eloquent writer, " with equal firmness endure the severity of the snows of Caucasus while they live, as they brave, when life verges on expiration, the fire that terminates their life of torture;"† alluding to the suicidal flames in which Calanus and Zarmanochagas perished. This particular subject of their sometimes consuming themselves, while yet living, on the funeral pile, and the general custom in India of burning their dead, I shall make the last article of consideration in this extensive and final chapter of the Indian Theology.

Arrian, speaking of this same race, observes: These people live naked. In winter they enjoy the benefit of the sun's rays in the open air; and, in the summer, when the heat

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vii. cap. 2.

† Tusc. Quæst. lib. v.

heat becomes excessive, they pass their time in moist and marshy places, under large trees, which, according to Nearchus, cover a circumference of five acres, and extend their branches so far, that ten thousand men may easily find shelter under them.*

Porphyry enters into the subject more extensively, and makes a just discrimination between the *Brachmans* and *Gymnosophists*, or *Samaneans*, as he calls them. He fixes very accurately the place of residence of the former, some on the mountains, by which he probably meant the old college at Naugracut, and some on the Ganges, at Casi and Patna. Those on the mountains, he says, feed on fruits and cows milk, congealed with herbs (probably curds, or ghee); those on the Ganges eat the abundant vegetables and wild barley that grow in its neighbourhood. In respect to the *Samaneans*, or *Sarmans*, as Clemens calls them, he characterises them very justly as men voluntarily depriving themselves of all worldly wealth and advantages, shaving their heads and beards, and resolutely quitting their wives and children for the desert. He describes them as living there upon herbs and water alone, as

* Arrian, lib. vii. p. 275, edit. Gronovii, and consult the engraving here annexed.

reluctlantly bearing the load of life, and, inflamed with the hope of transmigrating into a better state, as impatiently panting for the hour of their departure.*

There is no necessity to cite farther the sentiments of the antients on the subject of these rigid devotionists. Let us turn to the more authentic accounts of the moderns, and exemplify the train of general observations preceding by particular instances of individuals who have been seen, by modern travellers, in the act of suffering the almost-incredible severities alluded to above. One of them, whose veracity may be depended upon, has illustrated the subject with a very curious print of YOGEES in various attitudes of penance; and, since that print represents so strikingly both those devotees and the great banian-tree of India, of which so ample an account was inserted in a preceeding volume, I have had it engraved, by a very correct artist, for the inspection of those, whose curiosity may have been excited by the detail of their sufferings in this volume. It would have been inconsistent with propriety, though not with the delicacy I could wish to have been

preserved,

* Porphyry de Abstinentia, lib. iv. p. 167, edit. Cantab. 1655.

preserved, to have given any covering to deluded wretches, whose glory it is to have cast off every vestment, and with it the very sense of shame: the figures, I trust, are upon too small a scale to excite any disgust in the reader. It was to avoid giving offence that I forbore to have engraved, as it merited, upon a larger plate, that mighty tree, under whose shade they dwelt, and which may be truly called the monarch of the vegetable world.*

One of the Mohammedan travellers, who visited India in the ninth century, informs us, that "there are in the Indies certain men who profess to live in the woods and mountains, and to despise whatsoever is considered valuable by the rest of mankind. They go all their life-time stark naked, and suffer the hair of their head and beard to grow till it nearly covers their whole body. They religiously forbear to pare their nails, so that they become pointed and sharp as swords; and around the neck of each is suspended an earthen porringer, intended to contain the rice and other food which charity may supply. They, for the most part, stand motionless as statues, with their faces always turned to the sun. I formerly saw one in the posture here described, and

* Consult the description of it, vol. iii. p. 492.

and, returning to India about sixteen years afterwards, I found him in the very same attitude, and was astonished he had not lost his eye-sight by the intense heat of the sun."*

Baldæus, an excellent and authentic writer, who resided many years in India, says, that, besides their usual purifications, some of the Yogees carry huge iron collars about their necks, others travel about constantly encumbered with heavy fetters and chains of the same metal, while sharp nails, with their points terminating inwards, line their wooden slippers or sandals. Others, he adds, have caused themselves to be bound immoveably with strong ropes or chains to a tree, and in that posture expired, after lingering for many months in the greatest tortures; and that, in 1657, he himself saw a Yogee at Columbo, whose arms were grown together over his head from being kept long erect in that posture.†

It is exceedingly remarkable, that these men should possess such exalted notions of the purity of the Deity, and yet entertain such con-

* Renaudot's antient Accounts of India and China, p. 32, edit. London, 1733.

† Baldæus, in Churchill's Voyages, vol. iii. p. 896, first edition.

contemptuous and degrading ideas of the works created by him. According to them, all nature is contaminated, and the earth itself labours under some dreadful defilement, a sentiment, which, in my humble opinion, could only spring from certain corrupted traditions relative to God's *cursing the ground, and condemning it to bring forth thorns and thistles*, on the fall of man. To such an extreme point of extravagance, however, do they carry their conceptions on this point, that some of them, according to Du Halde, impelled by the dread of *terrestrial pollution*, have embraced the resolution of never more touching the planet which they were born to cultivate, and cause themselves to be suspended aloft in cages upon the boughs of trees, to which elevation the admiring multitude raise the scanty provision, necessary to the support of the small portion of life that animates their emaciated carcases.* Another of the antient Jesuits, cited in Purchase, relates as follows: "The JOGUES, with admirable patience, endured the sunne's heat; and one among the rest enclosed the trunk of his body in an iron cage, while his head and feet alone were at liberty. In this situation he could neither sit nor lie down

at

* See Du Halde's Hist. of China, vol. 1. p. 50.

at any time, and round the cage were suspended a hundred lamps, which four other JOGUES, his companions, lighted at certain times. Thus walked he, in this his perpetual prison, *as a light unto the world*, in his vain-glorious opinion."*

These sentiments and these practices are, I own, apparently very contradictory to some others in vogue among the Indians, such as burying themselves in pits hollowed in the ground, with only a small hole left open at the top to breathe through, of which an example or two will be given hereafter; and the custom of purifying themselves by passing through a natural or artificial cavern, where the spiritual pilgrims entered in at the south gate, and made their exit at the northern one, as was antiently the custom in the Mythraic mysteries, for astronomical reasons already assigned, and according to the remarkable instance which we have given of the famous Angria in modern times.† *Apparently contradictory*, however, as they are, they, in fact, originate in the same prejudices, and are referable to

* See Purchase's Pilgrimage, p. 636, folio edit. 1617. — Master Purchase ludicrously enough calls these JOGUES *sad rogues*; and to the SANIASSIS he gives the facetious appellation of *holy asses*.

† See the appendix to the preface, vol. i.

to the same creed. The penitents being first inhumed, and afterwards emerging from the pit, as well as their passage through the dreary cavern, were only emblems of terrestrial trials and struggles undergone and happily surmounted by the soul in its progress to perfection and glory through the various inferior spheres of purgation and purification; for, it should never be forgotten, that, to those spheres, in the Hindoo astronomical theology, different degrees of purity and sanctity are attributed; or, rather, to speak more properly, different degrees of impurity and guilt. Consonant to this idea, on one of their festivals that fall in June, and which, according to Mr Holwell, is called the UMBOOBISSEE, (Ambuvachi is the Sanscreet word,) the earth itself, conformable to the Egyptian and Greek mythology, being converted into a prolific female, *is left to her purgations* from the seventh day to the tenth of that month, both days inclusive, during which period, neither plough, nor spade, nor any other agricultural instrument, is permitted to molest her.* I ought also before to have mentioned this author's account of the Sanniass Pooja, or Hindoo Lent, which lasts from the first to the thirtieth of March,

on

* Holwell's Gentoo Fasts and Festivals, part ii. p. 125.

on which last day, the penance of the CHEREC, or *wheel*, is submitted to by the Yogee; a penance not the least painful and eccentric of those endured in India, and which is thus described by Captain Hamilton, who has given an engraving of the swing-machine on which the penance is performed. "On the coast of Canara," says our humorous captain, whom the severe pains of the penitents do not seem very sensibly to have touched, "several thousands of people assemble, in the middle of a grove, around a shapeless black stone of 300 or 400 weight, (it is the phallus of Seeva, and the performers are rigid Saivites,) besmeared with red lead mixed with oil, to serve for a mouth, eyes, and ears, with a vase of incense burning before it, and a young virgin of ten years old" (an Indian vestal, we must suppose; for, few are virgins in that warm climate after that age) "to attend and cherish the flame. Some priests all naked, except a cloth of decency, run and dance round the stone and fire for half an hour like madmen, making strange distortions in their faces and now and then bellowing like calves. This was the first scene. Those priests had previously erected a scaffold, about 15 feet long and as many broad,

broad, in the middle of which was elevated a piece of wood about 20 feet high. In the upper end of this beam was cut a notch, on which rested a lever about 40 feet long, with two cross-beams at the end, each four feet in length, with a rope fastened to the ends, on which the actors were to hang, and perform their parts. The penitents were four in number; and, presenting themselves to the priests, the latter took two tenter-hooks, exactly such as the butchers in Britain use to hang their meat on, and fix those hooks in the muscles of the backs of each. The hooks being fastened to the ropes at each end of the cross-beams, the penitents were then drawn up into the air. They were kept hanging by their backs in this manner at the distance of ten yards from the ground, while hundreds of other devotees dragged the scaffold, which went upon wheels, above a mile over ploughed ground; the suspended penitents all the while swinging round in a circle, whence the name of CHEREC, a *circle* or *wheel*. They were then let down in a bleeding condition, but both exulting themselves, and amidst the exulting acclamations of the spectators."* M. Sonnerat, who also

* Hamilton's Voyage to the East Indies, vol. i. p. 271. Oct Lond. edit. 1745.

also saw this dreadful ceremony performed on the Coromandel coast, says they are generally armed with a sword and a shield, which they brandish with the furious motions of a man who is fighting, and, to shew their heroism, often give themselves dreadful wounds. They must appear cheerful whatever pain they may feel; for, if tears escape them, they are driven from their cast, a punishment more terrible than death itself.*

These authentic accounts of the indifference which the devout Indians feel at the severest inflictions of corporeal pain may strike Europeans with astonishment, but they will not those who have resided in India, and seen the Yogees assembled under their sacred trees in acts of penance. For, what will not frantic superstition perform? In India, even the women themselves reject the natural softness and timidity of their sex, with determined resolution brave the dreadful ordeal of boiling oil, walk over plates of burning iron, and mount with serenity the funeral pile: while the men, by nature more daring and intrepid, perform such acts as can scarcely be admitted for true, even by credulity itself. An instance or two of this more desperate kind now lies before me,

in

* Sonnerat's Voyages, vol. i. p. 149

in Renaudot's Arabian Travellers, which for resolution and horror cannot possibly be paralleled among any nation of the earth, except among the sanguinary savages who sing the DEATH-SONG on the plains of America. A certain person, determined, like Calanus, to sacrifice himself alive in the flames, when he approached the altar, drew out his sabre, and, with his right hand, gave himself a wide and dreadful gash that reached from the breast far down in the abdomen, and laid bare his entrails to the view of the spectators. He then, with his left, tore out a lobe of the liver, which he cut off with the same sabre, and gave it to one of his brothers who stood by, conversing all the time with the utmost indifference, and with apparent insensibility to the torments that racked him. He then, with undaunted countenance, leapt into the flames, and, without any visible motion, was burnt to cinders.*

In the early periods, when these travellers visited India, it was the custom of the Yogees of the mountains to dare to acts of singular austerity those who lived in the plains. Among others, there once came down a Yogee who called upon the penitents of the plain either

* Antient Relations, p. 80.

to follow the example he was about to set them, or else to own their zeal and fortitude inferior. He sat himself down in a plantation of canes which grew in the neighbourhood. These canes, say our travellers, resemble our sugar-canes, are supple, and bend like them, have a large stem, and often grow to a vast height. When bowed down by force, they obey the pressure without breaking, but, as soon as the pressure is removed, they violently fly back, and regain their first rectitude. One of the loftiest and largest of these canes he ordered to be bent down to his height, and fastened his long and bushy hair strongly to the end of it; then, taking his sabre, which, from its keenness, sparkled like fire, he severed it from his body, and it mounted into the air. None of the spectators had resolution to follow his example, and the mountaineers triumphed over their brethren of the valley. The high reputation which the book, from which these facts are almost *verbatim* extracted, enjoys, will, I trust, rescue the relation either from contempt or discredit.*

Dr Fryer, an eminent physician and a Fellow of the Royal Society, who was at Surat about the same time with Baldæus, has also given

* Antient Relations, p. 82.

given a very ample and particular account of Indian penitents whom he visited under the great banian-tree in its neighbourhood. One of these penitents he remarked, whose nails, by neglect, were grown as long as a man's finger, having absolutely pierced into the flesh; and another, whose bushy, plaited, sun-burnt, hair trailed upon the ground, being above four yards in length. Some he saw with their arms so dislocated, that, as the Doctor expresses himself, " the διαρθρωσις of the joints was inverted, and the head of the bone lay in the pit or valley of the arm. In that situation they must necessarily be defrauded of their nourishment, and hang down useless appendages to the body; so that, unless relieved by charitable attendants, which are numerous at these holy retreats, the sufferers must perish, being totally unable to help themselves." Others, he observed, who kept their eyes immutably fixed on heaven, like Pliny's gymnosophists, their heads hanging over their shoulders, and incapable of being moved from that posture from the stiffness contracted, during a long uninterrupted rest, by the tendons of the muscles and the ligaments of the neck, so that no aliment, not liquid, can possibly pass, and even that is swallowed with much diffi-

culty. Others, by continued abstinence, were so emaciated, that they appeared like walking skeletons. All were bedaubed with ashes, and all slept upon the bare ground.

He gives two other remarkable instances of penitentiary suffering, the former of which will corroborate what was before inserted concerning the penance between four fires under a meridian sun, which must have appeared, to one who has not been an eye-witness of these horrible exhibitions, absolutely incredible. A Yogee had resolved, says our traveller, for forty days to endure the purgatory of five fires, the blazing sun above his head making the fifth. The solemn act was to take place during a public festivity, and before an innumerable crowd of spectators. Early in the morning the penitent was seated on a quadrangular stage with three ascents to it. He now fell prostrate, and continued fervent at his devotions till the sun began to have considerable power. He then rose and assumed the position of the Yogee before the fire in the print annexed, looking stedfastly at the sun, and standing on one of his legs, while the other was kept in a bent posture drawn up under him. In the interim, says our traveller, four fires being kindled (either of them large enough

enough to roast an ox) at each corner of the stage, the penitent, counting over his beads, and occasionally using his pot of incense, like Scævola, with his own hands increased the flames, adding to them combustible matter by way of incense; he then bowed himself down in the centre of the four fires, with his eye still fixed upon the sun, and stood upon his head, his feet being bolt upright in the air for three hours; after which he seated himself cross-legged, and remained so all the rest of the day, roasting between those fires, and bathed in the profuse exudation of his own grease.*

Three others of these devotees, according to Fryer, had made a vow not to lie down for sixteen years, but to remain standing on their feet during that time. The elder of them had completed the full period of this painful discipline; of the two others, the first had passed *five*, the second *three*, years in that position. The legs of all three were swollen in a dreadful manner, and deeply ulcerated; but, being unable to support the weight of their bodies, they leaned upon pillows suspended on a string, which hung from one of the branches of the banian-tree, after the

* Fryer's Travels, p. 102, edit. fol. 1698.

manner of another of the penitents in the plate. He, who had completed his penance, was afterwards entombed in the same standing position for nine days without taking any sustenance; and, to prove that he actually continued in his earthy bed during all the nine days, he caused, says our author, "a bank of earth to be thrown up before the mouth of his cave, on which was sown a certain grain, which *ears* exactly in nine days, and which in fact did *ear* before his removal thence." Fryer saw the squalid figure of this penitent immediately after his resurrection from this subterraneous prison.*

M. Sonnerat was the eye-witness of many of these extravagant penances on the coast of Coromandel. The following particulars are the result of his observation and inquiries. After having described some of their penances of inferior note, he proceeds to remark: "The Indians have, beside these, other more rigid penitents, whom fanaticism induces to quit friends, relatives, possessions, every thing, in order to lead a miserable life. The majority are of the sect of Seeva. The only goods they can possess are a lingam, to which they continually offer their adorations, and a tiger's skin, on which

* Fryer's Travels, p. 103.

which they sleep. They exercise on their bodies all that a fanatic fury can convey to their imagination: some tear their flesh with the strokes of a whip, or fasten themselves to the foot of a tree by a chain, which death only can break: — others make a vow to remain all their lives in an uneasy posture, such as keeping their hands shut, while their nails, which they never cut, in the course of time pierce through them. Some are seen who have their hands always crossed on their breasts, or lifted above their heads in such a manner that they can no more bend them. These unfortunate people can neither eat nor drink without the assistance of some disciples who follow them; and it may be easily judged what they must suffer, during several years, to reduce their arms to this state of inaction. Many bury themselves, and breathe only through a little hole; and it is wonderful, considering the time they remain under ground, that they are not suffocated. Others, who are less enthusiasts, are contented with burying themselves only up to the neck. Some are found who have made a vow always to stand upright, without ever lying down; they sleep leaning against a wall or a tree; and to deprive themselves of all means of sleeping comfortably, they put

their necks into certain machines that resemble a kind of grate, which, when once they have riveted on, can no more be taken off. Others stand whole hours upon one foot, with their eyes fixed on the sun, contemplating that planet with the most earnest application of mind. Others, again, observe the same position, with one foot in the air, the other resting only on tiptoe, and with both arms elevated; they are placed in the midst of four vases full of fire, and keep their eyes intensely fixed on the solar orb.

"There are also others who appear in public quite naked, and that to shew that they are no longer susceptible of any passion, and are re-entered into a state of innocence since they have given their bodies to the Divinity. The people, persuaded of their virtue, esteem them as saints, and imagine they can obtain of God whatever they ask: they also believe that they perform a work of piety in hastening to carry them victuals, to put into the mouths of those who are prohibited the use of their hands, and to cleanse them. The number of these more rigid penitents is much lessened since the Indians have been oppressed and reduced to a state of slavery. The only person of this kind I ever saw pierced his cheeks with an iron, which

which went through his tongue, and was riveted on the other side of the cheek with another piece of iron, which formed a circle underneath the chin.

" The characteristics of these penitents are great pride, self-love, and a belief that they are saints. They avoid being touched by people of a low cast, and Europeans, from a fear of being defiled; they will not even let them touch their goods, but fly at their approach. They have a sovereign contempt for all who are not in their state, and esteem them as profane: there is also nothing belonging to them but what is thought to contain some mystery, and that is not also esteemed worthy of great veneration.

" The Indian history has preserved the memory of a great many of these penitents, celebrated in antient times, and whom the penitents of this day glory in imitating."*

The Chaldeans, it has been observed, had *a feast of fire.* The Indians, likewise, have a feast of fire, during which, the zealous devotees among them walk on that element. It was instituted in honor of DARMA-RAJA, and should be more properly called a *fast* than a *feast*; for, those devotees are to refrain from food

* Sonnerat's Voyages, vol i. p. 176.

food during all the eighteen days which it lasts, forbear all connexion with women, sleep on the bare ground, and walk on a brisk fire. The last, or eighteenth, day, they assemble to the sound of instruments, their heads crowned with flowers and their bodies besmeared with saffron, and follow the image of Darma-raja and Drobede his wife, which are carried in procession three times round a fire, kindled to the honour of those deities.—After this, the devotees actually pass through the fire, which, M. Sonnerat asserts, is extended to about forty feet in length, walking through the flames slowly or quickly according to their zeal, and often, like the superstitious votaries of Moloch, carrying their children in their arms.*

On those most holy festivals, on which their greater gods are carried about on vast machines, drawn by several thousand devotees, our author has seen fathers and mothers of families, bearing also their children in their arms, throw themselves headlong under the broad and ponderous wheels, in hopes of gaining immediate admission into heaven by so exalted a fate as that of being crushed to death by the chariot of the god. By these suicidal executions, he informs us, the procession

* Sonnerat's Voyages, p. 153.

sion is never impeded, nor the people shocked. The machine is drawn over the bodies of these unfortunate wretches without emotion, and its weight, in passing, pounds them, unlamented, to atoms!*

Mr Hastings, in his prefatory letter to the Geeta, mentions his having seen one of these abstracted Yogees at his devotions, and adds some judicious observations on the absorption of the Brahmins, which the reader will not be displeased to see:—" It is to be observed, (says Mr Hastings,) in illustration of what I have premised, that the Brahmins are enjoined to perform a kind of spiritual discipline, not, I believe, unknown to some of the religious orders of Christians in the Romish Church. This consists in devoting a certain period of time to the contemplation of the Deity, his attributes, and the moral duties of life. It is required of those who practice this exercise, not only that they divest their minds of all sensual desire, but that their attention be abstracted from every external object, and absorbed, with every sense, in the prescribed subject of their meditation. I myself was once a witness of a man employed in this species of devotion at the principal temple of Benares:

* Sonnerat's Voyages, vol. i. p. 121.

Benares: his right hand and arm were enclosed in a loose sleeve or bag of red cloth, within which he passed the beads of his rosary, one after another, through his fingers, repeating, with the touch of each, as I was informed, one of the names of God; while his mind laboured to catch and dwell on the idea of the quality which appertained to it, and shewed the violence of its exertion to attain this purpose by the convulsive movements of all his features, his eyes being at the same time closed, doubtless, to assist the abstracton. The importance of this duty cannot be better illustrated, nor stronger marked, than by the last sentence with which Creeshna closes his instruction to Arjoon, and which is properly the conclusion of the Geeta: "Hath what I have been speaking, O Arjoon, been heard *with thy mind fixed to one point?* Is the *distraction* of thought, which arose from thy ignorance, removed?"

Mr Crauford, in his Sketches of Indian Mythology, (a book which merits a more important title than the modesty of the author has permitted him to bestow upon it,) mentions an instance of an Indian penitent, who, not long ago, finished measuring the distance between Benares and Jaggernaut with his body, by

by alternately stretching himself upon the ground and rising; which, he observes, if faithfully executed, must have taken up some years to have accomplished. He adds another of an aged father of a numerous offspring, who, like Calanus, recently devoted himself to the flames. He committed the fatal act in the hope of appeasing the wrath of a divinity, who, as he imagined, had for some time past afflicted his family and neighbours with a mortal epidemical disease;* a proof that the notion of the efficacy of a *human sacrifice* is not at this day wholly extinct in India.

In fact, the whole series of dreadful penances above-described, in reading which the mind of the reader must have been filled with alternate indignation and horror, is nothing more than the relics of a vast system of sanguinary superstition, which, from whatever quarter derived, is equally insulting to the Deity and destructive to his creatures. True religion, the religion which Christianity aims to establish in the world, impresses the mind with sentiments widely different from these; exalted Benevolence, tender Sympathy, and generous Compassion: it inculcates not an arrogant and presumptuous spirit to *dare*, but

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* Sketches, vol. i. p. 213.

a humble and resigned spirit to *endure*, the evils allotted to the present state; a state, which, though a state of probation, has its SOCIAL PLEASURES as well as its DISTRACTING CARES, and in which, while we are taught to bear the latter with becoming fortitude, we are permitted to enjoy the former with hearts overflowing with beneficent affections to our fellow-creatures and fervent gratitude to the Almighty Donor!

ON THE INDIAN CUSTOM OF BURNING THEMSELVES, AND THE MOTIVES WHICH LED TO THAT CUSTOM.

Having accompanied the Hindoo penitent, whether Saniassi or Yogee, thus far through a life of incessant misery and torture, but misery and torture scarcely felt, let us attend him to the fatal bourn whence no traveller returns; let us mark the closing scene, and behold the curtain eternally drawn over human suffering and terrestrial probation. By this I do not mean his dissolution, when he falls a victim to the langour and imbecility of age, when he perishes by the violence of disease, or sinks a

gradual

gradual martyr to his aggravated torments:—no; it is my intention to depict a more impressive and aweful picture; when, having gone through the prescribed penances of the four degrees, the Indian Brahmin determines to ascend the flaming altar of sacrifice, and, by a solemn and public act, devotes himself to the Deity. It is this resolute dereliction of life to which Cicero, cited in a former page, alludes, when he praises the fortitude of the Indians amidst consuming fire; and, though only an account of two instances of this desperate kind of self-destruction have descended down to us from classical antiquity, we know, not only that it is permitted in their sacred books, but that the dreadful rite has been actually and frequently undergone in India. To gain, however, immediate possession in Paradise by this rite is the splendid privilege of the Saniassi and the obedient wife alone. For what reason so brilliant a reward is promised to nuptial constancy in India falls not within the scope of my immediate inquiry; nor the fact itself of women burning themselves with the deceased husbands, a ceremony which has been often and affectingly described by others: my concern is with the devotee, who, animated by religious zeal, resolves to *burn*;

to examine his motives, and to display the rewards promised in the Vedas for an act which he stamps with the title of glorious and sublime.

This custom, so immemorially used in India, and so peculiar to it, had its origin, I am convinced, in the system of physical theology, which, in the remotest periods, so universally prevailed in the East. It was only one of the antient and symbolical ceremonies of the Mithratic mysteries realised. It was the last stage of purification; after which, the ætherial spirit, purged of its earthly dross, immediately ascended to the sublime source from which it emanated. This, possibly, as some sensible writers have imagined, might have been one reason that induced the Egyptians, wanting fuel in sufficient abundance for the general practice of this rite, to place the bodies of illustrious men in pyramidal monuments, which were the symbols of fire.

The deep immersion of the Indians in physical investigations is also to be traced in this as well as every other part of their theology. The notion, that they are to transmigrate through the elements to the Source of Being, induces them rather to wish for than retard the hour of dissolution of the elementary particles

ticles of which the body is composed. They are impatient during their confinement in the tabernacle of clay; they mount on the wing of hope; and are eager to consign, not only *ashes to ashes* and *dust to dust*, but to restore the igneous, the æthereal, and the humid, parts of the mortal frame to the respective elements. Hence they are, at this day, frequently brought from great distances to expire on the banks of the Ganges; and are precipitated into death by the quantity of sacred mud and water of that river, which is forced into the mouth of the dying person, in order to purify him for the new scene of existence into which he is about to enter. Indeed, his body is often thrown into the stream, while as yet a considerable portion of life remains, and is devoured by alligators. Thus, in fact, we see the watery, not less than the fiery, element is used as the medium through which the final transmigration is performed. The former method is principally adopted when dissolution takes place near any great and consecrated river: when it happens in situations very remote from the Ganges, or other sacred river, the body is generally burned. This custom, however, is not peculiar to the Hindoos, since many other nations, both

antient and modern, have been accustomed to burn their dead. The Persians, however, who of all antiquity held fire in the greatest veneration, never burned the bodies of persons defunct: they thought the sacred flame would be polluted by the injection of a putrid carcase; and exposed their dead, as is done in Guzzurat at the present day, on lofty towers, to be eaten by ravenous birds of prey, to be drenched by the searching rains, and scorched by the blighting winds. But let us return from this digression to the consideration of the human victim, who offers up himself alive on the altar of sacrifice. In searching the classical page of antiquity, we find the first instance of the kind in Arrian, the authentic biographer of the hero of Macedon.

Calanus, who burned himself before the whole assembled army of Alexander, was one of a body of penitents whom that prince saw and conversed with at Taxila, the modern Attock, situated on a branch of the Indus, to which it gives its name, and the only one whom he could prevail with to accompany his army back to Persia.* It is difficult to conceive him to have been a Brahmin, as, in that case, he would scarcely have left a country, of which

Arrian, lib. vii. p. 276, edit. Gronovii.

which every spot to the Brahmins is consecrated ground; or have crossed a frontier river, whose very name signifies *forbidden*, i. e. to be passed by the natives of India. Soon after his arrival in Persia, being disordered with a flux, he resolutely refused the proffered assistance and prescribed regimen of a foreign race of physicians, and solicited Alexander that a funeral pile, for the purpose of burning himself, might be erected, which Alexander at first strenuously refused; but, finding him inflexible, he at length gave orders for the deathful solemnity; when every thing was prepared after the manner becoming the grandeur of so great a monarch. The funeral scaffold was built of the richest woods, cedar, cypress, and myrtle; the richest gums and aromatics were scattered over it; and it was adorned with rich vestments and vessels of gold and silver. A litter, decorated with garlands after the Indian fashion, bore to that pile the venerable sage, who all the way sang hymns of exultation and triumph in the dialect of his country. Arrived at the pile, he ordered the costly furniture of all kinds, and the golden and silver vases with which it was adorned, to be taken away and distributed among his disciples and attendants; after which he as-

cended the pile, and, laying himself down upon it, was consumed. The instant that the pile was fired, according to his own express desire to have his funeral considered as a festival, the trumpets were sounded, and the whole army gave a shout, as in the moment of victory, being filled with equal admiration and astonishment at the sight of a man consuming to ashes without any perceptible motion; so powerful, says Arrian, are the force of habit and the impulse of education.*

The only other instance which we find in classical antiquity of an Indian devoting himself to the sacrificial flame, is that of Zarmanochagas, who ranked in the train of a numerous embassy, sent by king Porus, a monarch who reigned, as the letters brought by them set forth, over six hundred tributary sovereigns, and therefore must have been the supreme BALHARA of India, to enter into an alliance with Augustus, and cultivate his friendship. Numerous, however, as they were when they left India, all but three perished through the excessive fatigues endured in so distant a journey, and those three were seen by Nicolas Damascenus at Antioch. In the very name of this philosopher we discover the

* Arrian, lib. vii. p. 277.

the title of the antient sect of the Indian Sarmanes, or Samanæi, mentioned by Porphyry; and his conduct proved him to have been a true gymnosophist, aspiring after the honours of Brahmanian distinction. Zarmanochagas far exceeded Calanus in the value and merit of his sacrifice, since the former ascended the blazing pile when in the highest vigour of health, as well as when enjoying the full gale of prosperity, the latter when under the pressure of a painful disease, which he conjectured might destroy him. It was at Athens that he set the Grecian philosophers this heroic example of indifference for life and contempt of its most valued blessings; for, in the presence of all the learned and renowned of that celebrated city, having newly bathed and being anointed with rich unguents, as it were for a gay wedding rather than a funeral, with resolute step and smiling countenance he mounted the funeral pile, and suffered himself to be gradually consumed, while the Stoics of Greece stood mute and astonished spectators of a scene equally novel and wonderful.*

Although it must be supposed, that a custom so antient, and entitling the devotee to so exalted

* Suetonius, in Vitâ Augusti, cap. 21.

alted a reward, is by no means laid aside in India, yet I can find no particular detailed account of this ceremony in the page of any author, except that of the Mohammedan travellers, often referred to, as having visited India so early as the ninth century. What they have related on this interesting subject is, in substance, as follows. — When a man has resolved to commit himself to the sacrificial flame, he first goes to the palace and asks permission to burn himself from the reigning sovereign. Having obtained that permission, on the day appointed for the sacrifice, he makes a solemn and public procession through the squares of the city where he resides to the place where the funeral fire, already kindled, and blazing to a vast height, awaits the destined victim of his own infatuation. An immense concourse of people surround the pile, and feed it with every kind of combustibles. In the mean time, the cavalcade, consisting of the friends and relations of the devotee, proceeds slowly on, himself marching first, distinguished by the GARLAND OF FIRE that conspicuously adorns his head. This garland, esteemed more honourable by the Hindoos than ever was the laurel-wreath worn by a Greek or Roman victor after a campaign of glory, is formed

formed of straw or dried herbs, upon which, when placed upon his head, they heap burning coals, and invigorate the flame by pouring SANDARAC upon them, which catches fire like Naptha, and flames as fiercely. Though the blazing garland circles his temples, and the crown of his head be all on fire, too well evidenced to the spectators by the offensive stench arising from his burnt flesh, he pursues his way exulting, nor is the smallest sympton of pain seen to distort the features of his unchanged countenance, Arrived at the fatal pile, he looks round with an intrepid countenance on the flaming scaffold and admiring populace; and then, plunging into the flame; is, without a struggle, consumed to ashes.*

With this solemn and public act, performed in expectation of the glorious immunities promised in the Vedas, the journey of the METEMPSYCHOSIS by no means concludes, but rather the real birth is now commenced, and the *gate of immortality* is thrown open. Thus, happily released from its terrestrial incumbrance, the soul, sublimed, purified, exulting with holy transport, immediately mounts in its chariot of flame to the æthereal regions, or mansions prepared for the reception of departed spirits

* Antient Accounts of India and China, p. 80.

spirits, all varying in their splendor and delights, according to the various degrees of sanctity and excellence attained to during its earthly probation.

By these mansions (I must still adhere to my first-declared opinion) the Brahmin astronomical theologians, following the Sabian notions of their ancestors, mean *the orbs of heaven*; conceiving that their departed ancestors shall blaze forth in those celestial abodes with different degrees of splendor, even as *one star differeth from another in glory:* but those who have been supremely devout, and have been inflexibly rigid in their penances, *shall shine forth as the sun for ever.* This fact is, I conceive, incontestibly proved by innumerable quotations from Sanscreet authorities, interspersed throughout the preceding volumes; for, the soul that has only been moderately pious is ordained to leave the body at the time that the sun advances towards the south, on the night of some day when the moon is in her second quarter, and will go to the world of the moon. By the sun's southern tract, they mean the other hemisphere and its stars, which, in relation to them, appears to be beneath, and is, as I before observed, the hell, or Naraka, of the Asiatic mythologists, where the serpent

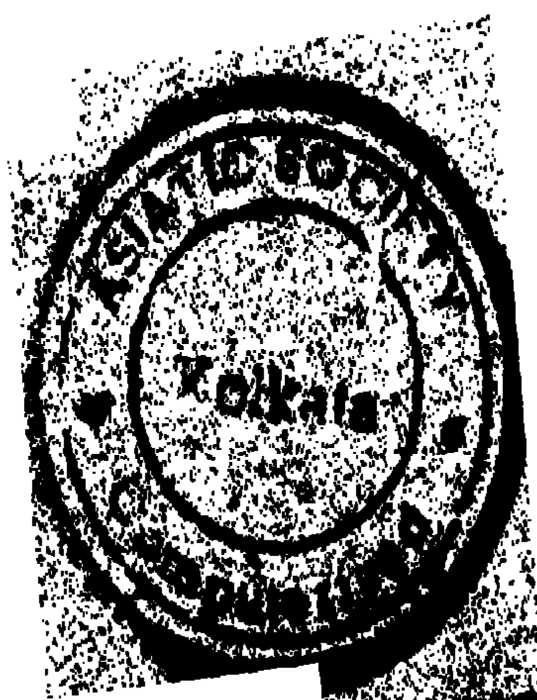
serpent Seshanaga with his thousand heads, every head adorned with a radiant gemmed crown, (a star,) holds his gloomy infernal sceptre.* The world of the moon denotes the orbit of that planet.

The soul ardently devout, whose austerities, during its earthly pilgrimage, have vanquished and even annihilated the action and influence of the corporeal senses upon the intellectual faculties, is liberated from the body precisely at the period in which the sun begins to bend its course towards the north, and on the morning of some day when the moon is in her first quarter. Immediately on its liberation from the prison of clay, it becomes a free denizen of infinite space, traversing at large the cerulean fields, and floating about in a form of subtle æther. After a long enjoyment of this celestial liberty, the reward of virtue long held struggling in terrestrial bonds, the soul seeks a permanent abode, and is now borne on a refulgent sun-beam to the paradise of Brahma, the sphere of the good deutahs, who have finished their earthly probation in the form of a Brahmin, and is there plunged in

* See the description of this Indian Pluto, the king of the NAUGS, or serpents, extracted from the Asiatic Researches, in vol i. p. 211.

in an abyss of inexpressible delights. It remains there for an immense period of time, after which it springs up with native energy to the Surya-logue, or sphere of the sun: whence, perfectly cleansed from all material dross, and clothed in robes of purest light, it passes to the Vaicontha, or paradise of Veeshnu, where it perpetually bathes itself in streams of light ten times more brilliant than the meridian sun, and it finally mingles with, and is absorbed into, the essence of the supreme Brahme, who, the veil of mythology being laid aside, is no other than the INEFFABLE, INFINITE, AND ETERNAL, GOD.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME, AND OF THE INDIAN THEOLOGY.


Kolkata

architecture, sacred dances and musical instruments, and compare the symbolic rites and superstitions of India and Egypt. Volume 6 talks of the diffusion of Indian mythology and sciences and the commerce, navigation and shipbuilding of India.

The final volume contains three dissertations relating to the origin of coined money, the antiquity of the Sanskrit language, and the code of ancient Indian jurisprudence. Unique in scope and content, the work is thus a veritable compendium on ancient culture and civilisation.

This re-issue of *Indian Antiquities* comes with two additional features : a freshly prepared Index and a new learned Introduction by Dr. K. V. Soundara Rajan, formerly Additional Director-General of Archaeology, Government of India.

THOMAS MAURICE was born in 1754 and received his early education at Christ's Hospital, Ealing and at Bath. He attended St. John's and University College, Oxford where he took his M.A. degree. While at Oxford he translated *Oedipus Tyrannus* for which Dr. Johnson wrote the Preface. By the year 1798 he had been ordained as a priest following which he held several curacies and the vicarage of Wormleighton and later, in 1804, the vicarage of Cudham. He was also Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts in the British Museum. A voluminous author, he was one of the first to popularise eastern history and religions.

The Rev. Thomas Maurice died in 1824.